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CDA likely to approve $22M tax breaks for Laulau. PAGE 3

Illegal drugs primary cause of suspensions of high school students PAGE 5

Poll: Most lawmakers get an 'F'

ROADSIDE MISHAP — FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Concerned passersby check on the occupants of this car that had overturned on top of the hill along the side of Tun Joaquin Doi Road in Finasisu yesterday afternoon. Police's preliminary investigation showed that the car ran off the road, hit a pole and concrete wall before overturning. The vehicle's occupants—two adults and three minor children—were not injured.

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Two lawmakers are receiving 'A' ratings while the rest of the House and Senate members are failing, according to a mid-term "report card" poll on a House member's Web site.

ON THE NET

http://www.camachocnmi.com/

Camacho

Rep. Tina Sablan and House floor leader Joseph Camacho have received 'A' ratings on a poll on Camacho' Web site as of Friday afternoon.

Web site visitors can grade each lawmaker individually as well as the overall Senate and House. Both the House and Senate have received over-

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, rate your level of confidence in President Barack Obama's ability to revive the flagging U.S. economy.

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

116 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Life in Prison

Three men, including one of the Philippines' top terror suspects, were sentenced to life in prison Friday.

MAHARLIKA...Page 12

Oscar Noms

"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" is the Academy Awards heavyweight with 13 nominations.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

'No foul play in death of Adriano'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Former Senate President Joaquin G. Adriano Sr. was found dead inside his home in Koblerville Thursday afternoon and police have initially ruled out foul play, according to the Department of Public Safety yesterday.

Adriano

DPS Commissioner Santiago F. Tudela told *Saipan Tribune* that responding police officers had to break a window to get inside Adriano's house.

Tudela said that Adriano's body was already in the first stage of decomposition when police came in.

"The son called up the po-

See NO on Page 4

Asian tourism set for rocky ride in 2009

HONG KONG (Reuters)—Across Asia, hotels, airlines and tourism operators are bracing for another tough year as the financial crisis keeps long haul visitors at home, and regional travelers tighten purse-strings with shorter, budget trips.

"There'll definitely be a drop in business, fewer tourists is a reality," said Laurence Lai, the owner of two photo galleries at Hong Kong tourist hotspots, including the Star Ferry pier, selling

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IN CANCELLATION OF $800K CDBG GRANT

GTC may shut down school

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

School administrators and Public School System officials are not discounting the "high possibility" of shutting down Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School if three of its oldest facilities are not immediately rehabilitated.

See GTC on Page 4

Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School acting principal Charlotte Camacho shows one of the termite-infested walls at Building F of the school yesterday. The campus may shut down if necessary repairs are not made soon.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Local

Masked man stages armed robbery

A masked man armed with a Taser robbed a store in As Lito Thursday morning.

No one was reported hurt during the robbery at Kanda Market, but the suspect ran off with a still undetermined amount of cash.

The suspect was described as wearing a black mask and black clothing. He was about 5'7" tall and medium built.

A Taser is an electroshock or stun gun.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said yesterday that police officers responded to the store after receiving a call about the incident at 10:22am.

Preliminary investigation showed that a masked man entered Kanda Market, located southeast of the New Happy Market, pointed a black Taser at the 29-year-old female cashier and demanded money.

The robber then pulled out the cash register, which contained an undetermined amount of money and assorted phone cards.

The suspect then ran outside and headed north. Police later recovered the cash register in a jungle area north of the store.

"The case is under further investigation," Ogumoro said.

The NMI Crime Stoppers Program is offering up to $1,000 cash reward to anyone who can provide information that will lead to an arrest. ***(Ferdie Dela Torre)***

OFW Support Group leads fundraising for sick worker

The Overseas Filipino Worker Support Group is now spearheading the fundraising for Geraldine Amor, 35, who was diagnosed with a serious medical condition and wants to return to the Philippines with her two sons.

Her aunt, Remy Amor, sought the help of the OFW Support Group to be the lead contact for all donations to buy airline tickets for the patient and her kids.

Carlito Marquez, chairman of the OFW Support Group's welfare committee, yesterday said they have started collecting monetary donations for the patient.

"We are calling on members of the community to help the worker in her time of need," said Marquez.

Marquez can be reached at (670) 286 6337 or (670) 322 5480.

Geraldine Amor has been in the intensive care unit of the Commonwealth Health Center since Monday afternoon. She was diagnosed with lupus, an auto-immune disease that can affect various parts of the body, including the skin, joints, heart, lungs, blood, kidneys and brain.

Her contract was not renewed when it expired on Dec. 10 due to her medical condition. She also has to take care of her 3-year-old and 1-year-old sons. ***(Haidee V. Eugenio)***

'Governor has no constitutional right to select teacher rep'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Last Jan. 14 marked the first anniversary of the expiration of the term of former CNMI teacher representative Ambrose Bennett.

However, his successor is still nowhere in the horizon after the administration yesterday confirmed that Gov. Benigno R. Fitial would take "no action" on the vacancy, citing that this is beyond his authority.

Press secretary Charles Reyes Jr. said yesterday that the governor is constitutionally empowered to appoint a teacher representative who is selected by a teacher bargaining agent representative.

However, he said there is no teacher bargaining agent organization representative.

This organization could only be selected by the Public School System or the Board of Education, both of which are autonomous and outside the control of the Executive Branch.

"Until all the required constitutional requirements are met by authorities empowered by the Constitution to administer the PSS, the governor has no authority to select or appoint anyone to be teacher rep," Reyes

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CDA RECEIVES 'NO COMMENT' ON REGS

CDA likely to approve $22M tax breaks for Laulau

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Development Authority acting executive director Oscar Camacho yesterday disclosed that the board most likely will approve on Tuesday the proposed changes in Saipan Laulau Development Inc.'s qualifying certificate after no one submitted comments on the proposed regulation.

Last Dec. 1, CDA published in the Commonwealth Register the proposed modification, revocation, and suspension of the QC to accommodate Saipan Laulau's request to increase its tax rebates from $18 million to $22 million.

CDA economic development analyst Carline Sablan said yesterday that no one submitted comments during the 30-day period.

"This is a clear indication that the public supports the agency's move to change the qualifying certificate program. On Tuesday, the board most likely will approve SLDI's request," Camacho said.

On Tuesday, the board is scheduled to hold a meeting on Tinian where approval of the Saipan Laulau modification request is expected.

Saipan Laulau, the owner of the Laolao Bay Golf Resort, is an affiliate company of the Kumho Group.

In an interview with Saipan Laulau president Kim Yun during the unveiling of the Laolao Golf Resort clubhouse, he disclosed that the modification request was made in consideration of the increased investment for the Laolao project—from $54 million to $70 million.

He revealed that one major phase of the Laolao project was the completion of the clubhouse, which costs $50 million. Other components of the project include villas, golftel tower, and a golf course.

However, the target date to complete the project, which is end of 2009, may be affected because of the depreciation of the Korean won, Kim said.

Yesterday, Camacho and Sablan said "changes in the investment amount" of Saipan Laulau was never brought to CDA's attention when it submitted its request for modification.

CDA, in consultation with the Finance Department's Revenue and Taxation, stated that the proposed amendments to the QC rules and regulations were formulated to restate, enhance and clarify the existing regulations and are necessary to effectively carry out the intent of the Investment Incentive Act of 2000, which created the QC program.

The proposed amendment stated that the CDA board may recommend the modification of QC for those in compliance and may suggest suspension or renovation for those non-complying beneficiaries.

The governor has 45 days to approve or disapprove CDA recommendation.

The modification is only available and only applies to timely modification requests made on or after October 1, 2008.

Saipan Laulau is the first company to benefit from the new regulation.

THE GREENING OF SSHS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Southern High School students look at the excavated foundation pit for the Skystream 3.7 wind turbine that will be installed at the school to power its science lab and water pump. This groundbreaking energy production system will utilize a combination of both solar and wind energy and will be implemented at SSHS by February 2009. The project is being funded by the former Concorde Garment Manufacturing Co.

'Proposed PSS budget not enough for salaries'

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Without a redistribution of money allotted to the Public School System in the fiscal year 2009 budget, PSS will be unable to pay for its personnel, Education Commissioner Rita Sablan wrote Senate President Pete Reyes.

In the fiscal year 2009 budget recently passed by the Legislature, PSS is allotted $28.3 million for personnel and $6.156 million in non-personnel, for a total of $34.46 million. PSS is also allotted $2 million in Compact-impact funding. The bill is now with the governor.

Sablan said PSS requires a minimum of $29.8 million for personnel. In the letter she requests the non-personnel budget be reduced in order to correct the personnel amount, or a lump sum budget be given to PSS.

"The impact of the current language would force PSS to reduce its personnel that would significantly affect students in the classroom," she said.

During a session earlier this week, House Speaker Arnold Palacios instructed Rep. Ray Yumul, the chairman of the House Ways and Means committee, to meet with Sablan.

Meanwhile, Teresa Kim-Tenorio, president of the Marianas High School Community Council, and Karen Borja, acting MHS principal, have written Rep. Stanley Torres requesting materials and or picnic tables so all of MHS' 1,100 students will have a place to eat their lunches. Currently, the cafeteria can only hold 150 students, so the rest must pick up their lunches and eat elsewhere, the two wrote.

For fiscal year 2008, MHS was granted $70,600 in local funds, an amount that has made it impossible to pay for necessary items, Kim-Tenorio and Borja said.

"We are in a crisis in regards to our total educational budget… due to the lack of funding, we are limited in our ability to purchase new textbooks or to pay for basic repairs and maintenance, such as painting, air conditioner repair, desk replacement, and light bulbs," they said.

Law appropriates $141K for Rota projects

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno Fitial recently signed into law a local bill appropriating $141,700 from local license fees collected for pachinko machines in the first senatorial district of Rota.

Under Rota Local Law 16-5, the money will be distributed as follows:

- $23,400 will go to 13 hemodialysis patient who are receiving government housing and/or hotel;
- $16,800 will go to four hemodialysis patients who are not receiving government housing or hotel;
- $4,000 is appropriated to four police cadets' stipends;
- $20,000 will be distributed to the Rota Gaming Commission;
- $28,000 will go to the Rota Legislative Delegation operations under the Senate leadership;
- $20,000 is appropriated to the Rota Mayor for special projects and promotions;
- $10,000 is set for youth/vocational programs and promotions;
- $15,000 for partial retirement of the 30 percent early retirement for five retirees; and
- $4,500 is appropriated for final payment to A&E Design for the bird sanctuary.

Various department heads will have expenditure authority depending on the project.

No funds can be reprogrammed under the law.

However, the Rota Little League president may use any remaining funds appropriated to the 13 hemodialysis patients to cover the costs associated with the 2008 Little League Tournament held on Rota.

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More tourists coming in for Chinese New Year

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

More tourists from China are expected to fly to the CNMI in celebration of the Lunar New Year, according to Pacific Oriental Inc., which handles the flight schedules from the destination.

POI Aviation general manager Frank Camacho yesterday said Air China is adding five extra flights to the island which started last week.

Approximately 800 tourists from Beijing will be on island until early next month, he added.

Shanghai Airlines is also bringing in a few hundred additional tourists from the destination.

Aside from the regular twice-a-week schedule, Shanghai Airlines is adding three extra flights starting on Jan. 18 through Feb. 9.

With seat capacity of 228, the additional influx will bring improvements to the arrival figures from China.

"These flights will bring us significant economic impact," Camacho said, adding that CNMI must take advantage of the upcoming celebrations of various destinations to enhance the island's tourism industry.

"In this difficult times, we need to work together for our tourism industry," Camacho said, emphasizing the "after-effect" on the island's restaurants and shopping places.

On Monday, Chinese tourists are expected to celebrate the Lunar New Year in various hotels.

According to Chinese Association of Saipan director Rose Chan-Matsuda, the traditional Chinese lion dance will be performed throughout the day at several business centers located in different villages to drive away evil spirits and to attract good fortune.

"Through the lion dance, the Chinese Association of Saipan hopes to bring good luck and better economy to the island," she said in a statement yesterday.

China is one of the two important CNMI markets that may be greatly affected by the federalization law, which will require tourists from the destination to secure U.S. visas prior to entering the CNMI.

This after the federal law excluded China and Russia in the CNMI-Guam Visa Waiver Program scheduled for enforcement on June 1.

ASIAN

From Page 1

iconic images of the former British colony.

"I expect a 30 percent fall at least. I'm having to shift my strategies to confront this financial tsunami, but you just have to stand firm and face the winds," added Lai, who relies on tourists for half his sales.

Asia's blend of diverse cultures, geography, bargains and exoticism, with travel gems ranging from snowy Himalayan kingdoms to neon-lit capitals, crumbling Khmer ruins and powdery beaches—have made it one of the world's fastest growing tourism regions in recent years, along with the Middle East.

But since the downturn intensified last year, travel markets spanning Hong Kong, Thailand and India have suffered sharp contractions, at times worsened by political turmoil, with many projecting negative growth in 2009.

Hong Kong, now one of Asia's top tourist hubs with 29.5 million visitors last year, is predicting visitor arrivals to dip 1.6 percent in 2009, though a steeper drop of 9.2 percent is forecast for non-Chinese visitors.

Singapore's tourist arrivals, meanwhile, fell 2 percent last year with more gloom expected, while Thailand and Malaysia both expect 9 percent drops in visitors this year.

Tighter budgets bite

The U.N.'s World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has described the Asia-Pacific region's performance in 2008 as having "deteriorated most rapidly", compared with the Americas, the Middle East, Europe and Africa, with tourism demand expected to be impacted further in the short to medium term.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has warned global airlines face their worst business crisis in 50 years with carriers facing possible collapse, revenues tumbling and hundreds of thousands of jobs at risk.

IATA'S director-general said in December some 300,000-400,000 jobs were at risk among some 32 million or so people now employed around the world in air transport, travel and tourism sectors.

Despite the extremely fragile situation, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) expects Asia, which lured around 280 million international arrivals in 2008, to bounce back and enjoy 4-5 percent average growth over the next three years.

"We are extremely cautious in our optimism, but we still believe it'll be above the line over the next couple of years," said John Koldowski, director of the Strategic Intelligence Centre for PATA.

But Koldowski said more budget-conscious travellers cutting back on lengths of stay and spending, could spell worse-than-expected pain for tourism-reliant businesses such as retailers, catering and hotels.

Hotel occupancy rates in the Asia Pacific region fell to 66.7 percent last November, versus 76.4 percent for the same period a year before, according to STR Global.

"While we're saying the (arrivals) numbers may still show some growth, we're very conscious of the fact that people are changing their habits and you can't expect the same amount of revenue out there," he added.

The UNWTO says it expects the decline in trip duration and spending to be "more pronounced" than the fall in arrivals.

James Standen, an American tourist is an example of this.

Snapping shots of Hong Kong's cityscape with his wife on Victoria Peak, he said the tanking U.S. economy hadn't put them off their 10-day trip to Asia, but they delayed coming till after the New Year to save on airfares.

"The economy hasn't really bitten us ... but it cost about half as much by coming later."

Political risk

Political instability and shifting government policies have also exacerbated the strain on the tourism sector in countries such as Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Macau.

The weeklong siege of Bangkok's airports tarnished Thailand's reputation as a tourist haven, and caused around a million foreign visitors to cancel or go elsewhere.

Thailand's Central Bank recently forecast tourist arrivals could fall 9 percent this year to 12.8 million, the worst year since 2005 after the tsunami disaster.

In India, 179 people, including scores of tourists, were killed in November's Mumbai attacks, when gunmen targeted luxury hotels and other popular tourist spots in India's financial capital. The gloom has since spread to places such as Goa, one of the country's top tourist draws where visitor arrivals fell 25 percent during the peak season, according to officials.

GOVERNOR

From Page 2

told *Saipan Tribune*.

The issue of the teacher rep has been on the table for quite some time after the court denied Bennett's request to render an opinion on the specific constitutional provision.

Reyes said that, according to the governor's education adviser, Daniel Nielsen, the legal position has been detailed and verified numerous times by various legal counsels, including an attorney general, several assistant attorneys' general, and a former legal counsel of PSS over many years.

"The governor has no constitutional right to select Board of Education members, and he has no legal right to name a BOE teacher representative except as outlined following a process detailed in the CNMI Constitution," Reyes said, adding that before the governor could be involved, the Education Board must formally recognize a single entity as the representative of the teachers as a bargaining representative for PSS.

So far, this has not occurred, according to the press secretary.

"Not being able to legally appoint a teacher representative to the Education Board has been extremely disappointing. However, the governor is hopeful that the BOE and/or PSS will take the necessary steps outlined in the Constitution so that he may select a teacher representative as soon as possible," Reyes added.

NO

From Page 1

lice, so the police went up there. We are waiting for an autopsy," the commissioner said.

Adriano, 49, lived alone in the house. His son last checked on him two days prior to Thursday's discovery of Adriano's body, Tudela said.

DPS spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said that DPS received a call at 1:58pm from an Adriano family member reporting a possible dead person in the house.

Upon entering the house, officers discovered the body of the deceased, Ogumoro said.

Adriano was transported to the Commonwealth Health Center where he was pronounced dead at 4:16pm.

"Detectives are still looking into the cause of death. This case is pending further investigation by the DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau," Ogumoro said.

Adriano was named Senate president in 2004. In 2005, he ran for the Tinian mayoralty but lost.

GTC

From Page 1

GTC acting principal Charlotte Camacho disclosed this yesterday, emphasizing the school's failing marks from the Bureau of Environmental Health that requires every campus to be safe and orderly for students.

Camacho conceded that the bureau gave the school a "passing grade" in consideration of the action plan presented by GTC, which includes the scheduled rehabilitation of Buildings B, F, and G.

In a tour of the campus yesterday, school administrators disclosed that the three most dilapidated facilities on campus have never been repaired or reconstructed in more than 30 years.

A total of 120 students in the upper grade may be affected if the buildings are closed down.

"We have no place to put all these kids. We're asking the governor for consideration to our children," Camacho said.

GTC has a total enrollment of 228.

There are 14 classrooms housed at the three buildings—four in Building B and five each in Buildings F and G.

In a news briefing at the school, acting vice principal Martin Dalsaso and PSS CIP coordinator David Loan emphasized the huge effort put in by school's PTA, the PSS leadership, and administrators in processing the needed permits for the reconstruction project.

Acting principal Camacho said that GTC received the grant proposal approval from the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. on Sept. 24, 2008.

"They [NMHC board] even increased the grant to $800,000, where they allotted $600,000 for the rehabilitation of the three wings and $200,000 for the collateral equipment," the acting principal said.

She said they were so elated by the "good news" that they immediately worked out a plan to begin the physical construction in June 2009.

On Thursday, the Board of Education expressed its disappointment over the cancellation of the project after Gov. Benigno R. Fitial allegedly rescinded the NMHC decision and reallocated the funds to a Koblerville soccer field. The board urged the governor to "re-consider" his decision.

"We want to inform the governor that this is very crucial to our students. GTC got its $66,000 share from the $1.2 million he reprogrammed from CIP…but that was just intended for the termite control and other electrical upgrade," Camacho said, adding that she's worried that the Bureau of Environment Health will not give GTC a passing grade the next time it conducts an inspection at the school.

"BEH had cleared us before…because we showed them our plan through the CDBG grant…" the acting principal added.

Camacho is still optimistic that the project will push through until "formal notice of cancellation" from NMHC is received by GTC.

"We're still hopeful," she said, admitting that she's aware of the governor's letter to NMHC last Nov. 17.

Camacho said GTC will continue to submit its proposal to NMHC's CDBG until it gets the funding.

Rep. Joseph Camacho of Precinct IV and House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Ray Yumul were present in yesterday's briefing to show their support for the GTC project.

"I am here supporting GTC…I want to find out what's really going on. Education of our children is very important and I asked the governor to reconsider this project," Camacho told *Saipan Tribune*.

Also present to show their support were Education Board vice chair Herman T. Guerrero and PSS acting associate commissioner for administrative services Charlie Kenty.

POLL

From Page 1

all ratings of 'F.' The polls will be up through the end of the month.

Camacho said the polls are a good way for members of the 16th Legislature to get an understanding of where they stand. But, he added, he knows there are built-in shortcomings. Some people might be biased and give a lawmaker an undeserving grade or over-vote.

The interesting part of the poll results so far, Camacho said, is that the number of voters between precincts varies, so it shows people are interested in voting for their own precinct. In the House of Representatives, Precinct 1 members received the highest number of votes at 96 as of Friday. In the Senate, Precinct 1 has received the highest number of votes at 57.

The House overall has not received any votes for an 'A' grade, while the Senate has received one 'A' rating vote.

In his announcement of the report card, Camacho said he gave much thought to whether or not he should post the poll.

"My colleagues at the Legislature might not appreciate being publicly graded," he wrote in his message. "Ultimately, my decision to move forward and post this poll rested on the fundamental believe (sic) that as public officials we answer to the public. These feedbacks in the middle of a term can have positive results."

Camacho urged voters to take the grading seriously and do their homework before they vote.

"To the individuals participating on the poll, please take the time to review the legislation introduced by members of the House and Senate. Read the Standing Committee Reports," the Floor Leader said. "Take a look at the voting record. It may be time-consuming but please read through the Journals to see the debates and discussion. Make an informed decision. Legislators should get feedback from the public but it has to be an honest, deserved and informed feedback."

To vote or see the results of the poll, go to http://www.camachocnmi.com/ and click on the link "Legislator's Mid-term Report Card" near the top of the page. You may also access Camacho's Web site by visiting www.saipantribune.com and clicking on the link at the top rightmost side of the Web page.

'Illegal drugs primary cause of suspensions of high school students'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan disclosed yesterday that the suspension of students in public high schools is largely due to illegal drugs and marijuana found in their possession in and around campuses.

School administrators issue a suspension order for two or more days during which the student's parents are called for information and counseling.

Without citing the recent data and statistics on student suspensions, Sablan said a significant decline was noted in the suspension data following the enforcement of character education among schools.

"One major issue in the suspension of students, especially in the secondary levels, is the illegal drugs and marijuana they're bringing to school," Sablan told the board, adding that this prompted school administrators to call the parents of the affected students.

'Punitive' policy

Board member Galvin Deleon Guerrero, chairman of the committee on school reform, disclosed that a lot of suspension orders on students were deemed "punitive," indicating some "abuses" on the rights of students.

In several committee meetings, he said concerns were raised on the negative impact of these suspensions, specifically on the required credits for graduation.

Deleon Guerrero described the existing student discipline policy of PSS as "pretty standard, fair, and gives a lot of power to school-level authority."

However, he said that "different interpretation" by school principals is what makes the "difference" in the policy.

"It's the policy versus the practice…that makes the big difference," Deleon Guerrero said, adding that many schools are seen having "unfair" practices in suspending students.

He noted that a suspended student must still be given "continuous learning" or some to-do list in the duration of their suspension.

Once a student exceeds the limited number of classroom absences, they can either be expelled or will not complete the program.

Deleon Guerrero said there's a need to properly inform the students' parents that a suspension can be appealed through the appeals committee, as stated in the policy.

"A lot of parents are not aware of the appeals process and this is a very valid and serious concern for PSS," he told the board, adding that PSS could not rely on policy that is punitive.

The board yesterday asked the commissioner to make a comprehensive data analysis of student suspension in the last three years so that PSS can assure the public that it is providing "discipline" without "punishing" the students.

Sablan, for her part, said the management will continue to work with counselors, especially in secondary schools to work on corrective measures.

'More parental involvement'

The board noted that the campaign for parental involvement needs to be enhanced by high schools as strong evidence of support is only seen in elementary schools.

Three options were recommended by the board committee to expand this effort.

First, asking lawmakers to consider legislation that will provide parental leave benefit for parents with kids at public schools; putting a parental involvement grade on the student's report card; and making the parental involvement part of the class instruction at all public schools.

MIFICPA to induct 2009 officers today

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Outgoing MIFICPA president Irene Santiago of Shirley's Coffee Shop poses with incoming president Melvin Malvar of Tropex Garden Co.

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants will hold the induction rites for its 2009 set of officers and board members at the Filipino Workers' Resource Center in Marianas Plaza (formerly Nauru Building) tonight, Jan. 24, beginning 7pm.

Inductees are Melvin Malvar of Tropex Garden Co., president; Rene Cariaso of Century Insurance Co., vice president for external affairs; Robert Reyes of Century Insurance, vice president for internal affairs; Aileen Indino of Grant Thornton LLP, secretary; Donna Paleracio of Joeten Enterprises, assistant secretary; Ronnel Calma of Car Quest, treasurer; Cristy Villaflor of Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan, assistant treasurer; Bebilyn Estrada of Century Insurance, auditor; Nolito Santos of Marpac, business manager; Marlon Estigoy of Hafadai Beach Hotel, public relations officer; and Irene Santiago of Shirley's Coffee Shop, Loise Manese of Joeten Ace Hardware, Aileen Javier of Hardt Eye Clinic, Marie Luisa Taniegra of RNV Construction, and Jhocelyn Doreza of Burger & Comer PC CPA, board members.

Philippine Consul General Wilfredo D.L. Maximo will administer the oath for MIFICPA 2009 officers and directors.

Glicerio "Eli" Arago, senior vice president of Tan Holdings Corp., will be the keynote speaker, with this year's theme, "MIFICPA Upholding Professionalism, Commitment, and Service."

This year's theme is a challenge for all Filipino CPAs and accountants to be at the cutting edge and participate in MIFICPA's activities and learn the changing trends of the profession.

MIFICPA is inviting all Filipino CPAs and accountants in the CNMI to become active members and be part of the realization of the organization's vision and mission

To confirm attendance, call Aileen Indino at 789-0021. Refreshment will be served after the ceremony, courtesy of MIFICPA and generous sponsors. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Mafea meeting set

The Marianas Association of Filipino Engineers and Architects will have a meeting on Jan. 25, Sunday, at 2:30pm at the Aglipay Apartment residence of association president Bong de Guzman in Chinatown. For those who don't know the place, call 233-5938 for instructions on getting there. Agenda will focus on the forthcoming project, the plan reading course, which will start on Feb. 1 at the Philippine Overseas Labor Office, ground floor of the Marianas Business Plaza (formerly Nauru Bldg.). Other matters will follow immediately after the main agenda. ***(PR)***

Kagman Flea Market invitation

The Kagman Komunidat Association is inviting interested individuals to participate in the Kagman Flea Market to be held every government payday Saturday at the Kagman Community Center parking lot. The Kagman Flea Market begins on Saturday, Jan. 31 at 8am at the Kagman Community Center parking lot.

Interested individuals who would like to sell used items are encouraged to join. No businesses are allowed to participate. Call the Kagman Post Office at 256-POST for more info.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT

Happy birthday greetings go out to David John (DJ), second from right, and Gus T. Aldan, rightmost, who are both celebrating their birthdays today, Jan. 24, 2009. Wishing you two many blessings from your family here on Saipan and in Fort Polk Louisiana.
The two birthday celebrants are shown here with, from left, Joey Lizama, Johannes Maratita, and Melvin Cepeda.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to 4 CMC, Div. 7, Section 7306 (i) of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Oceania Insurance Corporation is making its intention known of increasing the company's paid-up capital and surplus in accordance with this statute.

LAURIE STURGES
Manager
Oceania Insurance Corporation
1st Flr. Chong's Bldg.
Pale Arnold Rd., Gualo Rai
PMB 557 Box 10000
Saipan, MP 96950

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Bruce L. Mailman & Maya B. Kara
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and
January 31, 2009
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Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents
Board of Regents Conference room, NMC - Saipan Campus
Wednesday, January 28, 2009
3:30pm

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  a. Roll Call
  b. Review & Adoption of Agenda
  c. Review & Adoption of Minutes
    1. December 30, 2008 – Regular Meeting
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. REPORTS
  a. Associated Students of NMC
  b. Staff Senate
  c. Faculty Senate
  d. CFAO Financial Report
  e. President – WASC Accreditation Update
  f. BOR Standing Committees
    1. Fiscal Committee – BOR Action
      a. PL10-66 Annual Report
      b. FY2010 Local Budget
      c. Approval of Signatories
IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION
V. ADJOURNMENT

/s/ Regent Charles V. Cepeda January 24, 2009
Chairperson, BOR

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 021

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MEMBER
The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Israel and Gaza, now

Two unilateral cease-fires at the end of a 22-day war in the Gaza Strip will buy another pause of limited duration in the decades-long conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, but nothing more. There are no bilateral agreements to prevent a resumption of fighting, let alone to resolve the underlying causes of conflict. Israeli officials say they dealt a significant blow to the Hamas military infrastructure and that the leveling of large swaths of Gaza will deter future rocket attacks on Israel. Hamas leaders, emerging from the rubble to resume control of Gaza, declare the organization's very survival a success; they live to fight another day. Both sides' claims might be true, yet they are false victories that cost more than 1,300 lives, the vast majority Palestinian civilians, and brought devastation to Gaza. There are no winners without negotiated solutions.

It used to be said that the road to peace runs through Jerusalem. Now the path to peace starts with road work and rebuilding in Gaza. It was heartening to hear that on Wednesday, his first full day in office, President Obama called the leaders of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and Jordan pledging to work for Mideast peace. He must engage fully and evenhandedly to ensure this cease-fire. The shelling of Israel and the flow of weapons to Hamas must be halted for good, with Egyptian and international monitors at the border. Israel must let humanitarian aid into Gaza, as well as supplies for the reconstruction of government buildings and an estimated 25,000 homes. The borders must be opened for economic activity.

Before any long-term negotiations can begin, both sides must put their houses in order. Palestinians must bridge the divide between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority; Israelis cannot make peace with some Palestinians while others remain poised to destroy them. Israel, we hope, will elect leaders in next month's elections who are committed to making the strategic concessions on settlements and other issues that are necessary for a negotiated peace.

We know this won't be easy. Hamas still refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist. Viewing all Israelis as occupiers, it has long sent suicide bombers and rockets into Israel with criminal disregard for civilian life. In this war, Hamas also cynically exposed its own people to attack by firing from heavily populated areas. For its part, Israel considers Hamas a terrorist group and refuses to meet with its leaders. In this war, Israel regarded even civilian institutions as legitimate targets, hitting the parliament, the Ministry of Justice and the Islamic University because they are the backbone of Hamas-run Gaza. Although Israel said it tried to avoid civilian casualties, Palestinians believe this was a war on all Gazans, combatants and civilians alike.

No one gets to pick their enemies. Ultimately, Hamas must accept that Israel is here to stay, and Israel must acknowledge that Hamas is part of Palestinian society, just as the Palestine Liberation Organization was when the two sides began negotiating in the 1990s. And Hamas is an elected political party. Trying to convince themselves that their enemies will disappear or that force alone can bring their opponents to the table will prove as fruitless as it has in the past.

(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

2,688 days without an attack

By MARC A. THIESSEN
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

When President Bush left office on Tuesday, America marked 2,688 days without a terrorist attack on its soil. There are 1,459 days until the next inauguration. Whether Barack Obama is standing on the Capitol steps to be sworn in a second time depends on whether he succeeds in replicating Bush's achievement.

As the new president receives his intelligence briefings, certain facts must now be apparent: Al-Qaida is actively working to attack our country again. And the policies and institutions that George W. Bush put in place to stop this are succeeding. During the campaign, Obama pledged to dismantle many of these policies. He follows through on those pledges at America's peril—and his own. If Obama weakens any of the defenses Bush put in place and terrorists strike our country again, Americans will hold Obama responsible—and the Democratic Party could find itself unelectable for a generation.

Consider, for example, the CIA program that Bush created to detain and question senior leaders captured in the war on terror. Many of these terrorists, including Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed, refused to talk—until Bush authorized the CIA to use enhanced interrogation techniques. Information gained using those techniques is responsible for stopping a number of planned attacks—including plots to blow up the American consulate in Karachi, Pakistan; to fly airplanes into the towers of Canary Wharf in London; and to fly a hijacked airplane into the Library Tower in Los Angeles.

During the campaign, Obama described the techniques used to prevent these attacks as "torture." He promised that if elected, he would "have the Army Field Manual govern interrogation techniques for all United States Government personnel and contractors." If he follows through, he will effectively kill a program that stopped al-Qaida from launching another Sept. 11-style attack. It was easy for Obama the candidate to criticize the CIA program. But as president, what will he do when the next senior al-Qaida leader—with actionable intelligence on plots to strike our homeland—is captured and refuses to talk? Will the president allow the CIA to question this terrorist using enhanced interrogation techniques? If Obama refuses and our country is attacked, he will bear responsibility.

Consider also the National Security Agency's program to monitor foreign terrorist communications. In the Senate, Obama voted against confirming then-NSA Director Michael Hayden to lead the CIA because, in Obama's words, Hayden was "the architect and chief defender of a program of wiretapping and collection of phone records outside of FISA oversight." In 2007, Obama voted against the Protect America Act, which temporarily authorized the NSA program. Last year, he promised to filibuster a long-term authorization but at the last minute switched his vote. He explained that he still wanted to make changes to the law, including stripping out immunity for telecommunications companies for their cooperation with the NSA—which would effectively kill the program. And he promised that "once I'm sworn in as President ... my Attorney General (will) conduct a comprehensive review of all our surveillance programs, and ... make further recommendations on any steps needed to preserve civil liberties."

Now that he has been sworn in, will Obama allow the program to continue through 2012 as Congress authorized—breaking his pledge to his liberal base? Or will he move forward with his promised review and impose new constraints on the NSA's ability to learn what terrorists are planning? If he does, what if we fail to connect the dots before the next attack?

Obama faces a similar quandary regarding Iraq. Bush left him with a stabilized Iraq, where al-Qaida is in retreat and American forces are coming home by the end of 2011 under a policy of "return on success." Candidate Obama promised to dramatically accelerate this withdrawal and to remove American troops within 16 months. Just last week, senior Obama adviser David Axelrod declared on ABC's "This Week" that Obama intends to keep that promise. The problem is that Gen. David Petraeus and the Joint Chiefs are not likely to recommend such a rapid and irresponsible withdrawal. That leaves Obama with two choices: He can scale back his plans and continue the slower drawdown already set in motion by President Bush. Or he can overrule his military commanders—and pursue a rapid drawdown over their objections. If he does this, he will own the potentially devastating results. In 2007, President Bush revealed intelligence that Osama bin Laden had told al-Qaida leaders in Iraq to form a cell to conduct attacks inside the United States—then the surge drove them from their havens and set back those plans. If Obama allows al-Qaida to regain its Iraqi havens, and the terrorists use them to strike our country, he will not be able to blame Bush.

President Obama has inherited a set of tools that successfully protected the country for 2,688 days—and he cannot dismantle those tools without risking catastrophic consequences. On Tuesday, George W. Bush told a cheering crowd in Midland, Texas, that his administration had left office without another terrorist attack. When Barack Obama returns to Chicago at the end of his time in office, will he be able to say the same?

The writer, who served in senior positions at the White House and the Pentagon from 2001 to 2009, was most recently chief speechwriter for President George W. Bush.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A mother's values shine through a President's inaugural address

THE WASHINGTON POST

Stanley Ann Dunham was all over the new president Tuesday—in the cut of his face, his smile, the shape of his eyes, his spine and especially the soaring spirit that brought him to this historic moment. "What is best in me," Obama has said, "I owe to her."

By COURTLAND MILLOY
(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Did you see Barack Obama's mother at his swearing-in Tuesday?

She was all over the new president—in the cut of his face, his smile, the shape of his eyes, his spine and especially the soaring spirit that brought him to this historic moment.

"What is best in me," Obama has said, "I owe to her."

Let us join him, then, in paying respect to Stanley Ann Dunham, who did not live to see the enormous fruits of her labors. She died of cancer in 1995, at age 53.

Stanley. What a name for a girl. A twist, perhaps, on the Johnny Cash song "A Boy Named Sue," in which the name helps the boy toughen up in anticipation of hard times ahead.

Dunham, an anthropologist, was certainly tough on Obama, chastising him in high school for failing to put enough effort into his studies. "Remember what that's like? Effort?" he has recalled being asked by her. "You can't just sit around like some good-time Charlie, waiting for luck to see you through."

So when Obama reminded the nation in his inaugural address of the values on which our success depends, he was speaking words that had come straight from his mother's heart.

"Hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism—these things are old. These things are true," Obama said. "They have been the quiet force of progress throughout our history. What is demanded, then, is a return to these truths."

But this was more than an echo from his upbringing. It was a wake-up call meant to avert a looming national disaster, as wars rage on and the economy teeters on the verge of collapse.

Parents, teach your children well.

"For as much as government can do and must do, it is ultimately the faith and determination of the American people upon which this nation relies," Obama said. "It is the kindness to take in a stranger when the levees break, the selflessness of workers who would rather cut their hours than see a friend lose their job which sees us through our darkest hours. It is the firefighter's courage to storm a stairway filled with smoke, but also a parent's willingness to nurture a child, that finally decides our fate."

Dunham did that for Obama, waking him up at 5 a.m. to tutor him in English, making sure the boy could speak properly. And look how it turned out. He is extraordinarily well educated but not aloof. He's tough and regal, not a rogue. He sacrificed the chance to make millions of dollars in corporate America and chose instead to advocate on behalf of the downtrodden.

He's a man of the people, not a snob.

And what does he get for all of that?

Michelle Robinson, for starters, whose upbringing reinforced the importance of discipline, commitment, unity and love. They married and had two wonderful daughters. And he went on to become president of the United States.

It is a remarkable achievement when any parent raises a child who actually lives by such truths. Dunham, phenomenally, helped Barack to meet the highest standards of citizenship.

There has never been much of a chorus to sing Dunham's praises, no doubt in part because of the racial politics that characterized the presidential contest. She was most often presented as Exhibit A in attempts to prove that Obama was biracial, not black. Or not black enough. Or else she was given little notice, as if too much emphasis on her would dilute the one thing that makes Obama's presidency seem so miraculous.

The first black.

In the end, though, it was Stan who had the plan, and the blueprint is embodied in her son, the new president:

"What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility," Obama said, "a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task."

Partners in crime: Why lawlessness works for Chavez and Putin

By ROBERT R. AMSTERDAM
Special to The Washington Post

Robert R. Amsterdam is an international lawyer who represents political prisoners in several countries, including Eligio Cedeno in Venezuela and Mikhail Khodorkovsky in Russia. He blogs at www.robertamsterdam.com.

The administrations of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Vladimir Putin in Russia are enjoying a robust, burgeoning friendship. Though they are separated by 6,000 miles, the two leaders' bond is sealed not only by their similar tastes for repressive authoritarianism, oil expropriations and large arms deals but also by parallel trends of increasing violence and murder on the streets of their cities.

The most high-profile political murder since the 2006 slaying of Anna Politkovskaya took place in Russia on Monday, when 34-year-old human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov was shot, point-blank, in the head. The student journalist accompanying him was also killed. Three days earlier, radio journalist Orel Zambrano was assassinated in Venezuela, the second journalist killed there in as many weeks. Human rights groups have denounced the murders, but few seem to see that the conditions leading to violent crime in Russia and Venezuela are no accident.

Putin and Chavez preside over a pervasive sense of violence and insecurity in their capitals, which has resulted in parallel, politically motivated attacks against the opposition. In Russia, this trend has been illustrated by the shooting of Politkovskaya and, more recently, the near-fatal beating of journalist Mikhail Beketov, among many others. Last month alone in Venezuela, there were 510 violent deaths, leading Foreign Policy magazine to deem Caracas the "murder capital of the world."

In Putin's Russia, attacks by self-described nationalists against foreigners have gained international media attention—helped in part by a video of a gruesome beheading that has been spread on the Internet. In Venezuela, three leaders of opposition student unions have been killed in street attacks, including University of Zulia organizer Julio Soto, who was shot 20 times in Maracaibo in October. Both countries have experienced rising public demonstrations of discontent during the economic crisis, and the rallies have been met with heavy-handed repression by police.

Since Putin and Chavez are said to rule with "iron fists," a menacing question arises: Why have they been unable to stem the tide of crime in their streets? Is it a reflection of incompetence, or is there some tacit benefit to keeping a society imprisoned under a cloak of severe insecurity and moral panic?

Some answers became clear to me during a recent visit before a congress of student leaders in Caracas. These impressive young men and women, who cooperate across the political spectrum, take on enormous risks in assuming political consciousness. In Bolivarian Venezuela, political discrimination has been institutionalized by the pervasive use of blacklists, and those who oppose Chavismo accept a future of divisiveness and lost opportunities.

This political landscape is eerily similar to what has happened in Russia under Putin; the citizenry experiences the same helplessness and fear in the face of a leviathan cloaked in the misappropriated vocabulary of democracy.

The similarities are striking: Whether its banner is "21st Century Socialism" or "Sovereign Democracy," neither administration is comfortable discussing the considerable fortunes that have been amassed by government officials or the impunity of the corrupt. Both in Putin's Russia and in Chavez's Venezuela, the state has become the principal instrument used by predatory business groups, which employ the authority of the courts, regulatory agencies and police to seize assets, influence deals and enrich themselves at the people's expense. This relationship is particularly noxious because it is grounded in the insecurity of the populace.

While the relationship between Russia and Venezuela is outwardly manifested by military showmanship, it is actually an alliance of entrepreneurial convenience meant for a small group of beneficiaries. For the heads of state-owned businesses, for example, things are flourishing. A plethora of military hardware sales agreements have been signed, while Russian national energy firms enjoy multiple exploration licenses in Venezuela's Orinoco Belt that most multinational companies would be denied on principle.

In both countries, key members of the opposition are barred from participating in the regime's continuous political campaign. The fight to suppress real opposition is waged through constitutional amendments that create an appearance of competent rule but actually are designed to exclude opposition. What is not accomplished by faux legalism is carried out through government-backed neighborhood militias or extreme nationalist youth groups.

In my discussions with the Venezuelan student leaders, I was struck by deep parallels with the conditions faced by Russian civil society leaders, such as Oleg Kozlovsky, whose courage has never faltered in the face of attacks, arrests, threats and harassment from official and unofficial sources. It occurred to me that the monstrous violence on the streets of Caracas and Moscow is perhaps useful to both regimes—and that in their incompetence at delivering public security, they have found a convenience that contributes to their grip on power.

The first step toward improving this situation is to drop the pretense that these two governments have constructed a vertical structure of power and recognize that they have institutionalized a horizontal structure of incompetence—one characterized by violence, insecurity and impunity. It's time we summoned the political will to hold such world leaders accountable for the rights of their own people by all means available, regardless of how much oil they export.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Mostly sunny with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°	▲86° ▼78°

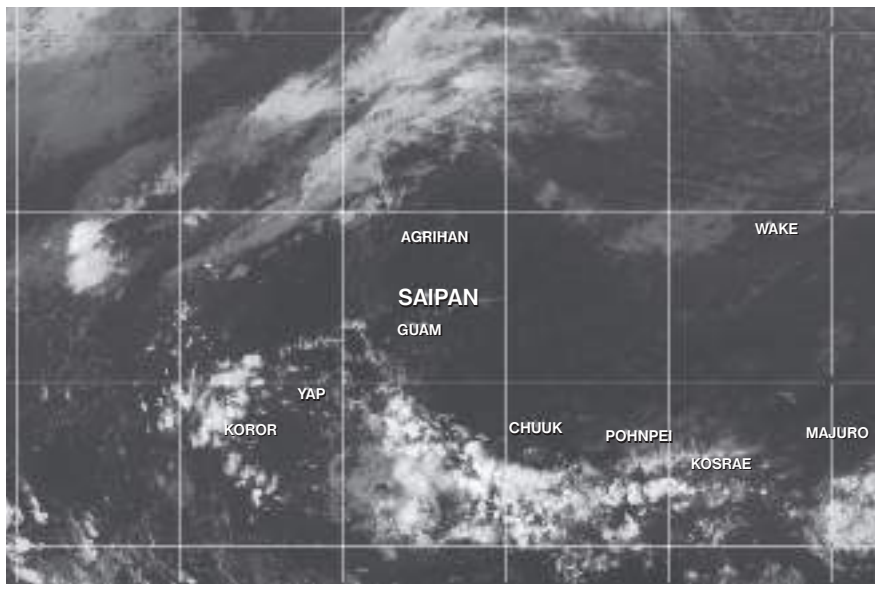
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84	▼75
Palau	Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	▲90	▼77
Pohnpei	Showers	▲86	▼77
Kosrae	Showers	▲88	▼77
Majuro	Rain	▲82	▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲75	▼66
Beijing	Sunny	▲22	▼15
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲57	▼48
Honolulu	Showers	▲77	▼69
London	Cloudy	▲43	▼37
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	▲66	▼52
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲83	▼71
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲77	▼58
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲76	▼61
New York	Partly Sunny	▲39	▼16
Osaka	Snow	▲36	▼24
Paris	Showers	▲41	▼35
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲35	▼19
Rome	Rain	▲59	▼43
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲44	▼32
San Francisco	Showers	▲56	▼47
Seoul	Cold	▲18	▼13
Tokyo	Mostly Cloudy	▲47	▼28
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲44	▼24

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, JAN. 23, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N134E to beyond 130E at 23N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 100 miles northwest of the cold front. Another cold front runs southwestward from 25N180 to 22N170E then continues as a shear line to 20N165E then extends westward to 20N150E. Scattered showers are found along and up to 100 miles northwest of the cold front and shear line. A weak surface trough runs northeastward from 14N130E to 20N134E. Scattered showers are occurring between 16N and 21N from 132E to 135E. Trade-wind convergence is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms in a large area covering much of Micronesia. The area spans eastward from between the equator and 9N from 140E to 150E to south of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae between the equator and 6N from 150E to 167E and finally over Butaritari and Tarawa atolls within 100 miles of a line from 2N167E to 3N175E to 6N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

12:41 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
8:03 AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
1:03 PM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
5:41 PM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Sunday	6:47 AM	6:12 PM
Monday	6:47 AM	6:12 PM
Tuesday	6:47 AM	6:13 PM
Wednesday	6:47 AM	6:13 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:03 AM	4:25 PM
Sunday	5:50 AM	5:17 PM
Monday	6:33 AM	6:08 PM
Tuesday	7:13 AM	6:59 PM
Wednesday	7:51 AM	7:48 PM

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The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio

Sunday		
	9am	Sunday school
	10am	Regular worship
	6pm	worship
Wednesday		
	7pm	worship

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries

Sunday	5:30am-6:30am	
Morning prayer		
	7am-9am	English service
	7am-9am	Sunday school
	10am-12noon	English service, Koblerville
Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting
Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service

Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 24, 2000

Legislature posts 126 percent hike in vehicle procurement
The CNMI government cut down by 28 percent its expenses on leased vehicles in fiscal year 1999 which amounted to $1.4 million compared to FY 1998 as part of its austerity measure, according to a report made from the Department of Finance. However, records show that the savings would have been bigger had the Legislature reduced its purchase of vehicles during FY 1999. The Legislature recorded a 126 percent jump in vehicle procurement and another six percent growth in leased vehicle spending duringOverall, the CNMI government leased only 148 vehicles in FY-1999, from 211 units during the previous fiscal year.

HANMI seeks reasonable fee on water chemical monitoring
The Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands has asked Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio's assistance in coming up with a plan that will ensure payment of a reasonable fee in connection with the planned chemical monitoring of water systems in the CNMI. In a letter to the governor, HANMI President Ron D. Sablan said the high expense of the testing is very untimely as businesses are suffering due to the slowdown on the island's economy. He reminded the governor that these new arbitrary and unexpected fees" proves the CNMI's unstable investment climate. "We believe that all CNMI residents and visitors deserve clean and healthy drinking water. But DEQ's handlding of these new requirements seems unreasonable," Mr. Sablan said.

JANUARY 24, 2001

Hundreds march against abortion
Religious leaders in the Commonwealth challenged the community Monday night to stand up and openly oppose any abortion-related practices on the island to protect the rights of women and the unborn. During the March for Life Rally, members of various religious groups and government agencies gathered in front of DFS Galleria and walked all the way to the American Memorial Park where a prayer rally was held. The group was led by Christians for Life Rev. Reymond Kinsela and Fr. Joe Belloti, SJ who both asked the public to take a stand against abortion which claimed thousands of lives for the past years. Based on the statistics provided by the organization, more than 14 million abortion cases since 1972 were reported in the United States alone, where 56 for every 1,000 women who had abortion are between 18 to 19 years old.

Rota welcomes shooting resorts
Hundreds of Rota residents have penned their support to a petition calling for the revival of the Shooting Range bill that would pave the way for the establishment of international "shooting resorts" on the island. Copies of the 43-page thick petition enlisting the names of Rota residents were submitted by Rota Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona to Governor Pedro P. Tenorio, the Senate, the House, and the Rota Legislative Delegation in a last-ditch effort to convince local leaders of Rota's strong interest to embrace the investment opportunity. The people of Rota has described the shooting range initiative as an "economic stimulation" measure the island and the Commonwealth desperately needs.

JANUARY 24, 2002

Japanese avoid US destinations
Japanese travelers are not likely to swarm tourist destinations in the mainland United States and its territories this year, according to a 2002 outlook report released by Japan Travel Bureau Corporation. However, Asian destinations are expected to see higher tourist traffic from Japan as Japanese travelers remain wary about their safety in the US and its territories due to the September 11 attacks, as well as due to economic reasons. Domestic travel may also benefit from this situation, although overseas trips are anticipated to grow by mid-2002, according to the 22nd survey released by the JTB.

Local teens give life to girl power
Strictly a girls-only affair, some 75 Hopwood female students convened at the campus cafeteria during the official kick-off yesterday of the local chapter of the Island Girl Power, a spin-off from the Guam-based society of empowered teenage girls. The nearly two-hour assembly facilitated by the Public School System, the Department of Public Health and the Community Guidance Center introduced the young students to the exclusive girl group, whose mission is to help nine- to 14-year-old girls avoid behavior that could negatively affect their health or well-being. The Island Girl Power's aim is to raise awareness among young girls and their adult caregivers of the risks of alcohol, tobacco, illicit drug use and the benefits of developing individual competencies and self-confidence.

Business

World markets mixed as US data is worse than expected

LONDON (AP)—World stocks were mixed Thursday after worse-than-expected U.S. unemployment and housing data cut off an earlier rebound that saw investors buying up beaten-down bank stocks.

An announcement by Microsoft Corp. that it is cutting 5,000 jobs over the next 18 months—a sign of how badly even the biggest and richest companies are being stung by the recession—also sent U.S. stocks down in early trading.

The Dow Jones industrials fell more than 150 points. Other indexes also declined, with the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite taking the biggest hit due to Microsoft's news. The software giant also posted an 11 percent drop in profits.

In Europe, Britain's FTSE 100 benchmark index was 0.60 percent higher at 4,084.23 in European mid-afternoon trade. But Germany's DAX was down 0.67 percent at 4,232.52, and France's CAC 40 fell 0.42 percent to 2,893.51. In the morning, all three had risen at least 2.0 percent higher.

European markets had followed Asian stocks higher as bank shares—battered this week on fears of deep losses and possible collapses—rebounded with the help of investors looking for bargains.

The earlier rally in Europe and Asia—where Japan's Nikkei 225 gained 1.9 percent to 8,051.74 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng closed up 0.6 percent at 12,657.99—was largely due to a bounce in financial stocks.

But banking shares remained largely volatile throughout the day, with Royal Bank of Scotland—which lost over a half of its share value in a week after it said it expected the largest loss in British corporate history—up more than 20 percent at one point. Its shares were up 2.4 percent at 12.80 pence ($0.18) by mid-afternoon in London.

The buying was fueled in part by hopes that President Barack Obama's government will quickly enact a financial rescue plan. Treasury Secretary-designate Timothy Geithner told lawmakers that passing the stimulus plan was essential.

"There's the inevitable chatter that part of the upside could be attributed to the Obama effect as confidence rises that the new administration will have a more effective plan to turn around the economic crisis," said Matt Buckland, a dealer at CMC Markets.

He noted, however, that Wall Street has yet to make up for the rout it suffered on Inauguration Day, as sentiment remains fragile.

U.S. data on jobs and housing were worse that expected. The Labor Department said the number of first-time jobless benefit claims jumped to a seasonally adjusted 589,000 in the week ended Jan. 17 from a revised 527,000 the previous week. Economists polled by Thomson Reuters, on average, forecast claims would increase to 540,000.

"Unemployment numbers are bad, and might get a little worse," said Roy Williams, chief executive of Prestige Wealth Management Group. "Everyone is in a defensive mode right now."

Data from the Commerce Department showed the housing market continued to weaken in December. Construction of new homes and apartments plunged to an all-time low annual rate of 550,000 units last month. The December number was 15.5 percent below November's figure, which had been the weakest on record.

Such news would echo bleak data from the rest of the world.

Germany on Wednesday said economic growth this year could easily shrink by the most since World War II, and many governments were forced to announce a new round of bank rescue measures.

China's economic slump deepened in the fourth quarter, with growth sliding to a seven-year low of 6.8 percent from 9 percent the previous quarter. For the full year, China's economy expanded by 9 percent—its slowest yearly growth since 2001.

In Japan, exports plunged at a record pace of 35 percent in December, marking a third straight month of decline, the government reported.

The data, worse than many expectations, together highlighted the damage being inflicted on Asia as demand for cars, electronics, clothes and other goods evaporates in the U.S. and Europe.

"Clearly our region is really plunging into a steep recession," said Dariusz Kowalczyk, chief investment strategist for SJS Markets in Hong Kong. "We are going through a big slowdown."

Asian governments have been scrambling to prop up their economies, slashing interest rates and rolling out massive spending plans. Japan's central bank, while Thursday holding its key interest rate at 0.1 percent, said it would "examine" outright purchases of corporate bonds in the future to help capital-starved companies.

Oil prices, which have moved in tandem with equities in recent months, fell in European afternoon trade, with light, sweet crude for March delivery falling 27 cents at $43.28 a barrel. The contract jumped $2.71 overnight to settle at $43.55 a barrel on the New York Stock Exchange.

Nation

Obama breaks from Bush and orders Gitmo to close

WASHINGTON (AP)—Breaking forcefully with Bush anti-terror policies, President Barack Obama ordered major changes Thursday that he said would halt the torture of suspects, close down the Guantanamo detention center, ban secret CIA prisons overseas and fight terrorism "in a manner that is consistent with our values and our ideals."

"We intend to win this fight. We're going to win it on our terms," Obama declared, turning U.S. policy abruptly on just his second full day in office. He also put a fresh emphasis on diplomacy, naming veteran troubleshooters for Middle East hotspots.

The policies and practices that Obama said he was reversing have been widely reviled overseas, by U.S. allies as well as in less-friendly Arab countries. President George W. Bush said the policies were necessary to protect the nation after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks—though he, too, had said he wanted Guantanamo closed at some point.

President Barack Obama, accompanied by Vice President Joe Biden and retired military members, gestures in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, where he began overhauling U.S. treatment of terror suspects by signing executive orders and a presidential directive aimed at closing the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

AP

"A new era of American leadership is at hand," Obama said.

Executive orders signed by the new president would order the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, shut within a year, require the closure of any remaining secret CIA "black site" prisons abroad and bar CIA interrogators of detainees from using harsh techniques already banned for military questioners.

That includes physical abuse such as waterboarding, a technique that creates the sensation of drowning and has been termed torture by critics at home and abroad.

For the signing ceremony, Obama was flanked in the Oval Office by retired senior U.S. military leaders who had pressed for the changes.

Underscoring the new administration's point, the admirals and generals said in a statement: "President Obama's actions today will restore the moral authority and strengthen the national security of the United States."

Kennedy's abrupt withdrawal creates political whodunit

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Caroline Kennedy's mysteriously abrupt decision to abandon her Senate bid gave rise to an ugly swirl of accusations Thursday and feverish speculation over whether she jumped or was pushed.

The 51-year-old daughter of President John F. Kennedy was widely considered a front-runner for the Senate seat until she sent a midnight e-mail to reporters and Gov. David Paterson saying she was withdrawing for what she described only as personal reasons.

Even though many Democrats had thought Paterson was going to appoint Kennedy any day now, a person close to the governor said Thursday that Paterson had no intention of picking her because he believed she handled herself poorly in introducing herself as a candidate.

The person also said there were concerns about possible tax problems for Kennedy, a potential "nanny problem" involving a housekeeper, and media rumors that her marriage was on the rocks. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he said he wasn't authorized to speak for the governor, would not elaborate.

Kennedy spokesman Stefan Friedman would not detail her reasons for withdrawing, but complained: "This kind of mudslinging demeans that process and all those involved."

The state tax department said it could not find any problems with Kennedy's tax records. In a December interview, she denied she had any "nannygate" problem and said that her husband, Edwin Schlossberg, was very supportive and that they lived together with their children.

In recent weeks, the media gossip Web site Gawker and Vanity Fair have published rumors that Kennedy's marriage was in trouble.

House angry at bailout; Obama team makes pledges

WASHINGTON (AP)—The House expressed its bipartisan anger over a massive financial bailout package Thursday as the Obama administration undertook to assure lawmakers that it would spend the remaining money prudently and with greater oversight than the Bush administration.

In a symbolic vote, the House voted to reject President Barack Obama's request for the unspent $350 billion in a bailout fund for the financial sector. The 270-155 tally was a moot point because the Senate had refused to block the release of the money last week. That effectively made it available to the new administration.

The vote let Obama know that in seeking to shore up a shaky financial sector, he, like Bush before him, is operating on shaky political ground, even as the weakened banking industry continues to roil the stock markets.

Eager to signal a change, the Obama administration promised to force bankers to report their lending activity on a quarterly basis and to meet tougher executive pay requirements. From the podium of the White House briefing room and in written responses to senators, Obama officials pledged to ensure that the money is used to extend credit to small businesses and consumers.

"Those principles include ensuring that executive compensation is limited so that the American taxpayer can feel confident that any money that's used as a part of a financial stability package doesn't go to line the pockets of a CEO," White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said.

Timothy Geithner, whose nomination to be treasury secretary cleared the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday, told the committee in written response to questions that "oversight and transparency requirements in the original proposal were inadequate." He said banks would have to provide "detailed and timely information on their lending patterns broken down by category."

In addition, a new special inspector general assigned to oversee the funds said Thursday that he will ask all institutions that have already received money from the Troubled Asset Relief Program to account for their use of the money and to detail any steps they have taken to meet existing executive pay caps.

House Democrats push tax breaks through committee

WASHINGTON (AP)—Amid grim new evidence of economic weakness, legislation at the heart of President Barack Obama's recovery plan advanced in Congress Thursday over the persistent opposition of Republicans seeking deeper tax cuts.

"We are very pleased with the progress," said Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., after $275 billion in tax cuts cleared the House Ways and Means Committee on a party-line vote of 24-13. Democratic leaders have promised the measure will be ready for Obama's signature by mid-February.

"It will create jobs immediately, and it will also lay the foundation for economic stability as we go forward," Pelosi added.

But Republicans said there was no reliable estimate of the bill's impact on employment.

"The American people deserve to know what they are getting for their nearly $1 trillion," said Rep. Dave Camp of Michigan, the top Republican on the tax-writing committee.

In all, the measure costs $825 billion, a total expected to grow as it makes its way through Congress.

On the key vote of the day, Democrats closed ranks to preserve a tax break for this year and 2010 that would mean $500 for many workers and $1,000 for millions of couples, including those whose earnings are so low that they pay no federal income tax.

ACROSS THE NATION

Ill. governor's lawyer: I might sue to stop trial

CHICAGO (AP)—Facing almost certain defeat in a Senate impeachment trial, Gov. Rod Blagojevich might ask the courts to step in and block a proceeding that he considers "a sham," a lawyer for the Democratic governor said Thursday. Attorney Samuel E. Adam told The Associated Press on Thursday that a lawsuit challenging what he called "completely unfair" Senate trial rules is being prepared and could be filed to the state Supreme Court within days, pending a final decision on whether to move forward. Blagojevich's trial is set to begin Monday. The governor told the AP he has no intention of mounting a defense unless rules are changed before the Senate trial that will determine whether he's thrown out of office. "Give me a right to call witnesses, give me a right to subpoena witnesses and documents, to properly prepare a case—and I'll be the first one there," said Blagojevich, whose voice rose as he spoke. Otherwise, "I'm not going to be a party to a process like that.

Rally marks Roe v. Wade anniversary, new president

WASHINGTON (AP)—Tens of thousands of abortion opponents rallied Thursday on the National Mall to mark the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade amid concerns they could face political setbacks under the new president. The rally and subsequent march to the Supreme Court came two days after the swearing-in of President Barack Obama, which many demonstrators said emphasized the need to become more vocal with their message. Among those attending the rally marking the 1973 ruling that legalized abortion was Kirk Kramer of Cottage City, Md., who held up a sign reading: "The Audacity Of Hope: No More Roe." Kramer, a Democrat, said he has mixed feelings about Obama. He supports the president's position on Iraq but said he was concerned about statements Obama made during the campaign indicating support for the Freedom of Choice Act, which would overrule many state-level restrictions on access to abortion. "Our country is better than the war we have fought in Iraq and we are better than legalizing abortion," he said.

Sex scandal divides Portland and its gay community

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—A confession by Portland's first openly gay mayor that he lied about having sex with a teenager is dividing this famously progressive city, as well as its gay community. Just three weeks after Sam Adams was sworn in, many gays are questioning whether he is the man they want as their trailblazer. "Sam has been our guy forever, which makes this even harder," said Marty Davis, publisher of the newspaper Just Out, which has called for his resignation. "It's completely dividing and tearing our community right down the middle." Portland's progressive reputation is based on its dedication to eco-friendly buildings, its large network of bike paths, an expanding mass transit system and the city's welcoming attitude toward gays and lesbians, which was reflected in Adams' easy victory in last year's election. Adams took office on Jan. 1, making Portland the largest U.S. city with an openly gay mayor. But the community's image is taking a beating over the sex scandal.

Asia

Pakistan questions terror suspects

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Authorities were questioning seven al-Qaida suspects seized in a raid near the Afghan frontier after a tip from U.S. intelligence, Pakistani officials said Thursday.

The officials claimed that the detainees included a Saudi national linked to the 2005 London transit bombings. However, British investigators said they were seeking no foreign suspects over the attacks.

Capturing so many al-Qaida suspects alive would represent a fresh blow to the terror network in Pakistan, already under fire from stepped-up U.S. missile strikes on its hideouts across the Afghan frontier.

They also suggest Islamabad is working closely with Washington against Islamist militants, despite routine Pakistani protests over the missile attacks.

Two Pakistani security officials told The Associated Press that a Saudi called Zabi ul Taifi was among the seven caught when Pakistani forces mounted a raid on Wednesday near the northwestern city of Peshawar.

They said the swoop was in response to a tip-off from American intelligence, whose agents watched the capture in the village of Bara Qadeem from a nearby car. The officials requested anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media.

Spokesmen for the U.S. military and FBI said their agencies weren't involved. The CIA declined to comment.

A U.S. counterterrorism official told The Associated Press that "Taifi was among the top two dozen al-Qaida leaders."

"The fact that Taifi, a senior al-Qaida operations planner, is off the streets is significant," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the information. "He was deeply involved in internal and external operations plotting."

Pakistan's Interior Ministry chief Rehman Malik identified those detained as a foreigner and six Pakistanis. He said they included "high value targets" but did not elaborate.

Much of Pakistan's border region has fallen under the control of Taliban and al-Qaida militants and is believed to be a likely hiding place for Osama bin Laden.

The Pakistani security officials did not specify what role Taifi allegedly played in the London suicide bombings, which killed 52 people.

"We have reasons to believe that we got the right man who had played a role in the 2005 attacks in London," said one official, who said he received the information from security agents in Peshawar.

In London, police and intelligence officials said Taifi was not among suspects known to be linked to the 2005 bombings, but said checks into his background were under way.

Report: Obama should act quickly on NKorea nukes

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—President Barack Obama must not continue his predecessor's "bad practices" in dealing with North Korea and should act quickly to end a standoff over the country's nuclear programs, a pro-Pyongyang newspaper said Thursday.

The Tokyo-based Choson Sinbo paper, considered a mouthpiece for the communist regime, also reiterated North Korea's willingness to work with Obama to resolve the nuclear issue.

"The old U.S. policy set up an order of confrontation on the Korean peninsula and threatened peace," the report said.

"If President Obama's inauguration speech means he would abandon the bad practices of coerciveness and arbitrariness, and act positively in the international arena, the peace and security regime in this region is a subject" that must be addressed, it said.

The U.S., South Korea, Japan, Russia and China have been trying for years to coax North Korea—which tested a nuclear bomb in 2006—to give up its atomic ambitions.

Pyongyang agreed in 2007 to dismantle its nuclear program in exchange for aid, but the process has been stalled since August.

Last week, North Korea's Foreign Ministry said it would give up its nuclear weapons only if Washington establishes diplomatic relations with the regime and proves it is not a nuclear threat to the North—an apparent reference to Pyongyang's long-standing claim that the U.S. is hiding nuclear weapons in South Korea.

Both Seoul and Washington deny the accusation.

North Korea has not officially commented on Obama's inauguration Tuesday but the regime appeared to be using the newspaper to urge the president to take a softer approach when he forms his policy on the country.

In his inaugural address, Obama said he was ready to work "with old friends and former foes" to lessen nuclear threats. In response, the Choson Sinbo said the North also is prepared to make "joint efforts" with Obama if he accepts the North's conditions.

ASIAN BRIEFS

NKorea's Kim Jong Il meets with Chinese official

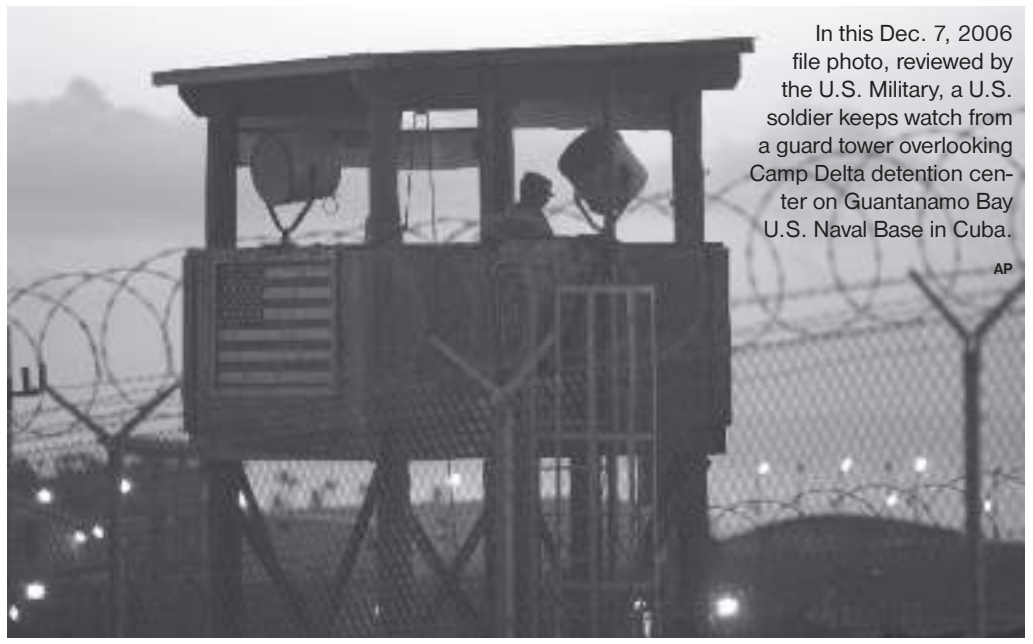
BEIJING (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Il met Friday with a senior official from China in Pyongyang, Chinese state media reported, the first known meeting between the reclusive leader and a foreign dignitary since he reportedly fell ill last August. South Korean and U.S. officials say the 66-year-old Kim is recovering from a stroke he suffered in August. North Korea, however, denies Kim has been ill and since October has been releasing a steady stream of photos and video footage showing Kim touring the country. The official Xinhua News Agency did not immediately give details of Friday's meeting between Kim and Wang Jiarui, head of the liaison office of China's ruling Communist Party. Wang may be able to offer the first outside account of the reclusive leader's health. The health of North Korea's totalitarian leader is of keen interest because he has not publicly named a successor. Kim inherited leadership of the Stalinist nation when his father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung, died in 1994 after being groomed for the post for 20 years.

China closes 1,250 sites in online porn crackdown

BEIJING (AP)—China has closed down 1,250 Web sites in its latest crackdown on online pornography but still faces an uphill task in regulating the unwieldy Internet for vulgar content, an official said Friday. Liu Zhengrong, deputy director of the Cabinet's Internet Affairs Bureau, said authorities have also arrested 41 people in the monthlong campaign that began Jan. 5. "We have made apparent achievements but it's only for this phase," Liu told reporters. "We still have a lot of work to do." Earlier this month, authorities warned Google, Baidu, Sina and Sohu—China's most heavily used sites—that they had to do more to block pornographic material from reaching Chinese users. The moves are part of a continuing government campaign against using the Internet to access pornography, which is banned in China. However, it remains widely available off and on the Internet, where popular Web portals frequently show sexually explicit pictures and provide links to pornographic sites. China's population of Internet users is expanding at explosive rates and has risen to 298 million after passing the United States last year to become the world's largest. On average, there are 240,000 new Chinese users and 3,000 new sites daily, Liu said.

World

Obama shutdown of secret prisons lauded



In this Dec. 7, 2006 file photo, reviewed by the U.S. Military, a U.S. soldier keeps watch from a guard tower overlooking Camp Delta detention center on Guantanamo Bay U.S. Naval Base in Cuba.

AP

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP)—U.S. President Barack Obama's decision Thursday to shut secret CIA-run prisons abroad brought renewed calls for their locations to be disclosed as well a fresh denial from Poland, one of two eastern European countries most closely linked to the practice.

Across Europe, governments uneasy that CIA flights had been carrying terrorism suspects through their airports and air space for years said they were relieved to be heading into a new rendition-free era.

Dick Marty, the Swiss lawmaker who spearheaded the Council of Europe investigations that sought to expose the existence of clandestine interrogation centers in Eastern Europe and Africa, said he expected the truth would come trickling out once the centers were closed.

"For some countries, things are going to become very embarrassing. I think European countries would do well now to tell the truth," Marty said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Marty said he "would be very surprised" if any CIA-run facilities were still operating in Europe, but added "in East Africa, or Morocco, I might assume there is something." He said Obama's order granting Red Cross officials access to all secret facilities might prove critical in revealing their locations, both past and present.

"I have deep respect for what's happening in the United States now. That's America as we love and respect and admire it," Marty said.

Poland and Romania are the NATO newcomers that welcomed U.S. military deployments and strongly backed former President George W. Bush's "war on terror." One country offered a strong new denial of involvement, while the other kept silent.

WORLD BRIEFS

Happy with wartime leaders—and Netanyahu, too

JERUSALEM (AP)—With a general election less than three weeks away, Israel's bruising offensive against the Gaza Strip's Hamas rulers has revived the flagging approval ratings of the country's wartime leaders. But polls suggest it might not be enough to deny the premiership to their main rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, the hawkish former prime minister who opposes his government's U.S.-backed peace talks with the Palestinians. Whoever wins will have to put together a coalition government and wide splits in Israeli society will mean another badly fragmented parliament that could doom the new regime to a short life. February's election will be Israel's fifth in a decade. The constant political turmoil has interfered with attempts to move Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts along, as Israel frequently does not have a strong enough government to make significant moves. Polls show Defense Minister Ehud Barak, head of the center-left Labor Party gained the most from the Gaza offensive. In a Jan. 14 poll, Barak's personal approval rating climbed to an all-time high of 70 percent, up from 53 percent two weeks earlier, pollster Camil Fuchs said.

US envoy in Iraq warns against hasty withdrawal

BAGHDAD (AP)—A hasty departure of U.S. troops from Iraq would carry severe risks, including bolstering al-Qaida and threatening Iraqi progress toward a functioning society, the outgoing U.S. ambassador said Thursday. Ambassador Ryan Crocker spoke to reporters a day after he and the top U.S. commander in Iraq briefed President Barack Obama on the situation here. Obama, who campaigned on a promise to end the war, asked the Pentagon to do whatever additional planning was necessary to "execute a responsible military drawdown from Iraq," the White House said Wednesday. Crocker, who is retiring after a 30-year diplomatic career, declined to say what he and Gen. Ray Odierno told the president during the video hookup. But he noted that the president was committed to a responsible pullout of the more than 140,000-strong U.S. force. "A precipitous withdrawal runs some very severe risks," Crocker said, including a possible revival of al-Qaida and encouraging "neighbors with less than benign intentions" to influence events in Iraq.

Fidel Castro says doesn't doubt Obama 'honesty'

HAVANA (AP)—Fidel Castro watched the U.S. inauguration on television and says he doesn't doubt Barack Obama's "honesty," breaking a monthlong silence with an essay published Thursday in Cuba's state-run press. The comments by the former Cuban president were released after a meeting Wednesday with visiting Argentine President Cristina Fernandez, who told reporters that "Fidel believes in Obama." The meeting with Fernandez dispelled persistent rumors that the 82-year-old Castro had suffered a stroke or lapsed into a coma in recent days. "I was with Fidel about an hour or more," she told reporters at the airport as she left. "We were chatting, conversing. He looked good." Castro himself wrote that the meeting lasted 40 minutes and he said the two exchanged thoughts about the new U.S. president. "I personally did not have the slightest doubt about the honesty of Obama, the 11th president since Jan. 1, 1959, when he expresses his ideas," Castro said he told Fernandez, referring to the day his band of bearded rebels toppled a dictator and took power in Cuba.

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, January 24, 2009

3 Rizal Day bombers get life in prison

By HRVOJE HRANJSKI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Three men, including one of the Philippines' top terror suspects, were sentenced to life in prison Friday for the 2000 Manila bombing that killed 11 people in an attack that revealed close coordination among militants across the region.

The five near-simultaneous bombings on Dec. 30, 2000 left a total of 22 dead and about 100 wounded, but the court found the three men guilty of only the main attack on a train station.

The ringleader, Saiffulah "Moklis" Yunos, was described by prosecutors as an explosives expert and self-confessed member of the main Muslim separatist group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The two others convicted and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole were Abdul Patak Paute and Mamasakul Naga.

The judge said he rejected their denials and alibis because they were positively identified by witnesses.

AP

Saiffulah "Moklis" Yunos, one of the top terror suspects in the December 2000 series of bombings in Manila that killed about 22 people and wounded 100 others, is escorted out of a courtroom following his conviction Friday, Jan. 23, 2009 in Manila, Philippines.

The Philippine and U.S. governments accused Yunos of carrying out the bombings on behalf of the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah. He had pleaded guilty in 2004 but later changed the plea.

Officials said he worked closely with Indonesian Fathur Roman Al-Ghozi, a demolition expert who bolted from a Manila jail in July 2003 and was killed in a shootout with police three months later in the southern Philippines, a militant hideout and training ground.

Prosecutors said Al-Ghozi and Yunos had confessed to buying about 155 pounds (70 kilograms) of explosives used to bomb the targets. Yunos prepared the bombs' wiring while Al-Ghozi admitted preparing the switch on the alarm-clock triggers and packing the explosives, they said.

It was the deadliest terrorist attack until the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group bombed a ferry in Manila Bay in 2004, killing 116 people.

The main Muslim rebel group, which has been fighting for self-rule in the predominantly Roman Catholic nation's south, has repeatedly denied links to Jemaah Islamiyah and publicly renounced terrorism. But security officials believe some commanders are providing refuge to militants, including Indonesians fleeing a crackdown in their own country.

Rebel spokesman Eid Kabalu has said previously that both Al-Ghozi and Yunos had met with the group's present chief, Al Haj Murad, as fighters against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

He said that after the war ended, Al-Ghozi and Yunos went to a rebel camp to join the group but they were turned away.

Philippine and U.S. officials have said that Yunos assisted Jemaah Islamiyah operations chief Hambali—arrested in Thailand in 2003—in conducting surveillance of the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Manila.

Yunos was arrested in May 2004. He initally entered a guilty plea on charges of multiple murder and multiple frustrated murder and said he was willing to pay for his actions. He later changed his mind, claiming he was coerced by authorities and did not understand Tagalog or English.

Pacquiao agrees to fight Hatton—report

By CEDELF P. TUPAS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—A day after promoters declared the fight has been called off after an impasse over the prize money, Filipino icon Manny Pacquiao has agreed to accept the offer to fight British superstar Ricky Hatton on May 2, a report on philboxing.com said.

The report quoting Pacquiao's close friend and confidante Rex "Wakee" Salud said the Filipino idol was convinced when told that he would receive a $12 million guarantee and 52 percent of the pay-per-view shares.

Eric Pineda, Pacquiao's business manager, told the Philippine Daily Inquirer that the "other camp has reached out to salvage the fight."

Pineda, however, stopped short of confirming that the fight was back on track.

"All I can say right now is that there are developments in the negotiations," he said in a telephone interview. Pacquiao had been insisting on a 60-40 deal, even though his promoter, Bob Arum, and Hatton's camp had agreed to an equal split.

This did not sit well with Pacquiao, who did not sign the contract before the Wednesday deadline, prompting Arum and Golden Boy Promotions chief Richard Schaefer to announce that the super-fight between the world's top pound-for-pound fighter and the king of the 140-pound division had been called off.

No bull run in Year of Ox—soothsayers

By BERNICE HAN
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SINGAPORE—By heeding the advice of his feng shui master, Freddie Low saved his share portfolio from getting burned last year in the worst global financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Low even managed to make a bit of money and is not taking any chances in the Year of the Ox, which begins Monday according to the Chinese almanac.

He is in constant touch with the feng shui master, getting advice on his investment strategy for a year which Asia's soothsayers agree will have one unfortunate trait—there will be no market bull run in the Year of the Ox, they say.

"He told me to be careful and hold back first because it looks like a rough ride," said Low, 40, a Singaporean IT professional.

Jenny Lin, a feng shui expert in Taipei and the author of several popular books, said: "Everybody has to work as hard as an ox while ploughing the field this year."

The Year of the Ox is missing the "fire" element that feng shui masters say is key to fuelling any financial activities. According to their analysis, this likely points to another lackluster run for the world's stock markets, many of which sank 50 percent or more in 2008.

LABOR FRONT

Laying-off alien workers

By FERDIE PONCE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Q: Laid-off alien workers who are housed in employer-provided housing are allowed to stay in that housing for how many days?

A: According to the regulations of the new labor reform law, the employer shall permit laid-off foreign national workers housed in employer-provided housing at the time of the reduction in force to remain in that housing for a period of 30 days following the effective date of termination. The employer is not responsible for providing food for laid-off workers.

■ ■ ■

Q: If an employer terminates an alien worker's contract, can he or she hire another foreign worker for the same job category after one week?

A: The new labor law regulations state that an employer who has laid off foreign national workers shall be barred for a period of 90 days from the effective date of termination from hiring any new alien workers to work in the job classifications held by the laid-off workers.

An employer who has laid off foreign nationals is barred for a period of six months following the effective date of termination from hiring foreign national workers from off-island to work in the job classifications held by laid-off workers.

■ ■ ■

Q: How can an employer show that the lay-off of workers is being done due to economic necessity?

A: The regulations state that economic necessity may be shown by a substantial reduction in work orders, a substantial reduction in funds, or a good faith reorganization to improve efficiency, among other factors.

Upon request, the employer shall also produce documentation confirming the economic necessity of the lay-offs. The Department of Labor may conduct an investigation on the lay-off of alien workers if the Labor Director or a designee has reason to believe the lay-offs were not prompted by economic necessity.

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US drones sighted over Sulu kidnappers' lair

By ED GENERAL, ALCUIN PAPA
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

JOLO, SULU—Residents have reported seeing unmanned aerial vehicles flying over Jolo town in Sulu province and nearby areas at regular intervals since the Jan. 15 abduction of three workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

And on Thursday, the military started shelling certain areas in the province, according to the residents who reported hearing a series of artillery fire.

The sightings of the UAVs have raised suspicions that US troops were actively involved in the rescue of Swiss Andreas Notter, 38; Italian Eugenio Vagni, 62; and Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba, 37.

The three were abducted, purportedly by members of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf, while they were on their way to the Jolo airport shortly after inspecting a water and sanitation project at the local prison.

A tricycle driver who was among those who witnessed the crash of an American UAV in Indanan, Sulu, in 2007 said he regularly saw such spy planes flying over Jolo for days before the shelling started.

"Like the one we saw in Indanan, the ones flying over here are bigger than a toy plane," said the tricycle driver who asked to be identified only as Jamil.

"I think they are of the same length of wing span—about two meters—as the one that crashed in Indanan," he said.

Halid, a resident of Barangay Kakuyagan, said the UAVs made sounds loud enough to be noticed at night.

"I hear something roaring just above my house. I cannot see it because it's dark at night, but I know it is something mechanical," Halid said, adding that he started hearing the "plane engines" shortly after the Red Cross workers were abducted.

The military has embarked on a massive rescue operation for the three captives near the town of Patikul, where they are suspected to have been brought by their abductors.

But Col. Jimmy Larida, commander of the Indanan-based Marine Battalion Landing Team, could not be reached for comment.

1st Lt. Estefanni Cacho, spokesperson of the military's Western Mindanao Command, said any information on the ground operation in Sulu was being withheld.

On Jan. 16, Jesus Dureza, the then press secretary, said the US government had "elements" in Sulu that continued to help the Philippine military in "capability building" in fighting terrorism.

"I am sure they will be assisting our operatives there with their technical support," Dureza said.

Gunmen abduct 3 teachers in southern RP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Gunmen intercepted a boat with three public school teachers Friday and sped off with their abductees toward a nearby southern stronghold of al-Qaida-linked militants, officials said.

Regional police chief Angelo Sunglao said the teachers were traveling near Zamboanga city's Pangapuyan island Friday when the four gunmen in another boat snatched them.

They took them toward Basilan island, where Abu Sayyaf militants, notorious for demanding ransom and terror bombings, are active. Suspected guerrillas are separately holding three international Red Cross workers they abducted a week ago on Jolo island.

Sunglao said security forces aided by helicopter were trying to find them.

It was not immediately clear if the Abu Sayyaf, on a U.S. list of terrorist organizations with links to al-Qaida, was responsible for the latest kidnapping. Other armed groups, including extortionists, also operate in the restive region.

"We have deployed soldiers helping the police in the operation to locate the victims. We are doing everything to locate them," said Col. Santiago Baluyot, commander of a military anti-terrorism task force.

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

Rebels attack Bukidnon jail

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Police say communist rebels pretending to be visitors have wounded a police officer and seized weapons during a raid on a southern Philippine jail. Regional police chief Danilo Empedrad says about 60 New People's Army guerrillas in three vehicles overpowered guards at the Malaybalay city jail in Bukidnon province Wednesday and fled with three M-16 assault rifles and three pistols. He says an officer was wounded during a brief gunfight. Army commander Lt. Col. Benedict Arevalo said Thursday that the guerrillas are resorting to snatching arms while avoiding direct encounters with stronger military units.

Body of teen girl fished out of Pasig

MANILA, Philippines—The body of a female high school student was fished out of the Pasig River Thursday morning in Manila. When found, the unidentified teenage girl had a uniform top of the Makati High School worn over her shorts and had a silver necklace with a pendant spelled "Khen" around her neck. PO1 Gerry Amores of the Manila Police District homicide section described the victim as between 15 and 18 years old, 5'7" tall, slim and fair-skinned. She was bruised on the left knee and had abrasions over the left eye and on the chin. Amores said the cause of the girl's death is still unknown but it is possible that she was a victim of foul play. He said the body appeared to have been hurriedly dressed up because the underwear was worn the wrong way, with the tag and the lining showing. The pair of shorts she wore was around her thighs. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer)***

Singapore national, 2 others nabbed

MANILA, Philippines—National Bureau of Investigation agents rescued 30 applicants for jobs abroad and arrested three persons, including a Singaporean national, in operations against suspected illegal recruiters in Bulacan. The agency has also launched a manhunt for four other persons, including an immigration officer, allegedly involved in the human trafficking ring. Arrested were Roland Chii Ming Teo, 62, a Singaporean staying at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Ermita, Manila, Liwayway Capistrano, 57, and Lanie Acaso, 36, both of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. NBI agents conducted the raid on Tuesday after two former maids who worked in Singapore filed a complaint with the agency.

'Prosecutor in drug case got P1.6M'

MANILA, Philippines—The anti-narcotics agent in the buy-bust operation that led to the arrest of three scions of prominent families told the House of Representatives that he received a letter informing him that the prosecutor who dismissed the drug case and his wife received a total of P1.6 million in their bank accountMarine Major Ferdinand Marcelino said the letter, which was sent to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency through fax on January 19, was from an anonymous sender. Marcelino said the letter stated that Prosecutor John Resado and his wife, Rowena, received P800,000 each in their bank account in Banco de Oro in Bacoor, Cavite. He said that according to the letter, Resado received the money on December 2, the day the prosecutor signed the dismissal of the case against Joseph Tecson, Ricahrd Brodett, and Jorge Joseph. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

ANOTHER NEW YEAR AP
Workers connect electrical wires that will light up lanterns Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009 in a park in Manila's Chinatown district in Philippines in preparation for the celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Ilonggos make bid for world record

By NESTOR P. BURGOS JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ILOILO CITY—Ilonggos Thursday feasted on what organizers said was the largest-ever bowl of Iloilo City's famed La Paz batchoy that was cooked in a bid for a world record.

At least 1,000 residents and guests flocked to the La Paz District plaza where a giant stainless steel bowl was set up to cook the savory noodle dish.

The bowl, measuring two meters wide and a meter tall and custom-made in Cebu City for P180,000, had a capacity of 3,500 liters. The broth alone was 1,700 liters.

Joel Adrias, vice president for operations of Deco's Batchoy, the original makers of the dish, said they expected to prepare 1,000-1,200 servings.

Three hundred servings were reserved for street and school children while the rest were served to guests and residents in the jampacked area at the public plaza.

"We are making history," city tourism officer Ben Jimena told spectators and guests led by Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas and Presidential Assistant for Western Visayas Raul Banias.

The dish is made of a mixture of meat broth and yellow noodles topped with slices of pork meat and innards, fried chopped garlic, spring onions, fermented fish paste (guinamos) and crushed pork cracklings (chicharon).

Anti-drug chief says pols use illegal drug trade to raise election funds

By TERESA CEROJANO
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A senior Philippines official on Thursday accused politicians across the country of dipping their hands into the multibillion dollar illicit drugs trade, possibly to raise money for next year's elections.

"There is narco-politics all over the country," Dionisio Santiago, head of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, said while painting a bleak picture of efforts to rid the Southeast Asian nation of illegal drugs.

Dionisio Santiago, left, head of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, gestures beside Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino, head of PDEA Special Enforcement Service, as they answer questions by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines at the financial district of Makati, south of Manila, Philippines on Thursday Jan. 22, 2009. AP

He said "politicians at all levels" were involved as either financiers or protectors of drug traffickers.

The possible scale of the problem came to the fore recently after President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ordered the temporary removal of five state prosecutors accused of taking bribes to drop trafficking charges against suspects.

Congress has opened an investigation into the allegations, although the prosecutors have strongly denied any wrongdoing.

Santiago said he is under orders from Arroyo to crack down on the drugs trade and spare no one.

He said Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno expressed concern that the proceeds from the drugs trade may be used to finance campaigns for the 2010 national elections.

RP govt fears 60,000 job losses in IT sector

Intel confirms Philippine plant closure

The government is giving counseling and retraining to "about 60,000 workers that could be affected nationwide" in the electronics industry as factories close down or cut workforces amid a deepening global recession, the secretary of labor said Thursday.

The labor department is "getting daily notices now not only of retrenchments but also of reduction of work shifts, reduction of working hours and compression of the workweek," Secretary Marianito Roque said.

"The semiconductor industry is already getting hit," Roque said in a television interview Thursday.

"We have seen this as early as three months ago," he said. "We expected that we'll be getting hit in the first semester of this year."

Plants employing 19,000 people have so far reduced shifts or working hours, Roque said. He did not say how many had been laid off.

The job cuts highlight the poor state of the electronics industry and could be the beginning of a wave of job losses in the sector.

"We have to admit that this is not business as usual in the Philippines for the electronics sector and in the garments sector as well," Roque said. "These will be the two particular areas that would be affected by the global financial crisis."

Roque said the government expected the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector to take up some of the slack in labor demand, with a "nominal growth" in the call center industry expected to create about 130,000 jobs this year.

The Philippines also hopes to send its workers to "hotel jobs in Bulgaria, and even manufacturing jobs also in some countries like Australia," he said.

Loss at Intel

A big loss will be at Intel Corp., the world's biggest maker of microprocessors, which announced Thursday that it would close down this year its assembly test plant outside Manila, which has 1,800 workers left after a big retrenchment last November.

"The impact of the economic downturn on our business was more severe than we anticipated and the outlook is uncertain," Intel Philippines said in a statement.

The announcement came a day after Intel slashed prices of a number of its chips and a week after it reported that its fourth-quarter revenue fell 23 percent from the year-earlier period and profit plummeted 90 percent.

PROTEST MARCH AP

Protesters, mostly farmers, march toward the Presidential Palace in Manila, Philippines, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, to commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the 1987 violent protest by farmers demanding a land reform that killed 13 peasants.

20 more Gaza evacuees arrive

By VERONICA UY
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—Twenty more Gaza evacuees, including two Palestinian husbands, have arrived in Manila, an official said Thursday night.

The evacuees returned home on board Etihad flight EY 428 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, said Bong Soriano of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

This brings to 71 the number of people repatriated from the war-torn territory. Of the number, four are the Palestinian husbands of Filipino women.

Foreign Affairs spokesperson Bayani Mangibin said the evacuees were escorted out of Gaza by a Philippine Embassy team in Tel Aviv.

"The evacuees were met on the Jordanian side of the border by the team from Philippine embassy [in] Amman," he said.

On Wednesday night, a group of 34, including two Palestinian husbands, arrived in Manila.

Soon after Israel started its assault on Gaza on December 27, the Philippine government offered to evacuate the 108 Filipino women and their children living in the troubled territory.

The first batch of evacuees consisted of 17 Filipinos, including one nun, who chose to be left behind in Tel Aviv.

When a ceasefire was declared last week, and Israel allowed the Palestinian husbands to leave with their families, two batches of evacuees immediately took the chance to leave for the Philippines.

Many of the returning Filipinos Wednesday carried a few belongings packed in small traveling bags, plastic shopping bags and backpacks.

"It was terrible and very scary to be in the middle of the conflict. There were explosions all around, day and night," recounted Janet Abu Shawez.

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR MONEY

Money mistakes seniors make

Editor's Note: This is part of Take Charge of Your Money, a partnership between INQUIRER.net and Citibank to help readers handle their personal finances well.

Question: My aunt is in her early 70s. She used to work as a nurse in the US but has retired here in the Philippines. We assumed she had built up some savings for retirement because she worked hard abroad for more than 30 years. So we are puzzled that today she has difficulty paying for all her medical expenses and other bills. She bought a car in cash a couple of years ago and hired a driver, but other than that we are not aware of other high-ticket items she purchased. What could have gone wrong? How can I avoid ending up like that?—Paula

Answer: Many people think that retirement would be a breeze; after all, they have earned it after working for so long. But as your aunt may have found out, retirement is not really a bed of roses if one hasn't prepared for it.

It may be possible that your aunt has indeed saved up, but it may not have been enough or the fund was not taken care of for it to last long. This is a common mistake seniors make in managing their finances.

Below are common mistakes seniors make when it comes to managing their finances. Think about what you can do to prevent committing them.

1 Not having a retirement fund.

It's in the Filipino culture to take care of our aging parents. That is why nursing homes for the elderly are very few in the country. Most Filipinos expect their adult children to take care of them when they are old, thus they have not saved up for funding their own retirement.

The reality, though, is not all adult children have the means to support their aging parents since they may also be having a hard time supporting their own families. This is why everyone should save up for his own retirement. This may be in the form of a pension fund or a do-it-yourself investment portfolio.

2 Not maximizing the potential gains of a retirement fund.

Put simply, this means not investing your retirement fund well before you retire such that you miss out on potentially higher gains.

For instance, putting all of one's savings in a savings account will yield only about 0.75 percent interest per annum. Contrast that with a special time deposit which could earn you about 6 percent per annum in five years. Even a retail treasury bond may yield 8 percent in three years' time. Bonds and stocks and pooled funds (unit investment funds and mutual funds) may even earn you more depending on the market.

3 Not adjusting investments as retirement looms.

Ideally, when you are nearing retirement, you should shift your investments from risky assets (such as equities) to less risky ones. As high risk investments may earn you more but may also make you lose, you can't afford to put your entire retirement fund in peril so close to retirement age.

When you are young, you can take on more risks in investing by exploring investments that may give you a higher yield. You will have enough time to ride out the market volatility and recover any losses. Then be more conservative and protect your capital as you see retirement in the horizon.

4 Being asset-rich but cash-poor.

Your aunt, for instance, has a car, but has difficulty paying her regular bills. Would it not make better sense to let go of the car so she can buy her medicines and pay for her living expenses monthly?

For some seniors, liquidating assets may be a good move to fund living expenses. Put cash in more easily accessible investments such as bank deposits.

5 Overspending.

Living it up sounds so wonderful at retirement, but seniors must recognize that money will dry up with no income coming in. This is why one must live within his means. Live simply and make your retirement fund last longer.

6 Having inadequate insurance.

It is during one's sunset years that health care and medical bills rise. So it is just right that one should avail of health insurance while still young. In that way, you will be protected and new chronic illnesses (such as hypertension) cropping up afterward will still be covered in old age. Make sure you have health insurance, disability insurance, and accident insurance.

7 Not having guaranteed income.

To ensure a worry-free retirement, one should consider having a steady guaranteed income stream even during retirement age. And it would be best if this income stream can beat inflation, meaning, it would earn at a rate higher than the inflation rate. Examples of such income sources would be money market investments and real estate rentals. With these, money would still come in even if you're not working and toiling in an office eight hours a day.

Or if you still can, consider working even part-time. Aside from keeping your mind sharp, a job at retirement age will give you income that could help you with your day-to-day expenses.

INQUIRER.net and Citibank invite readers to ask questions regarding financial matters. Send your questions to personal_finance@inquirer.net. Readers are solely responsible for their own investment decisions and should thus conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional advice. INQUIRER.net will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from our web site.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Angel and Luis 'LQ' a non-issue, says Edu

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Edu Manzano is never too much of a dad to be a friend to his son Luis. His sentiments about the recent Angel Locsin-Luis Manzano "LQ"?

"The lines of communication between me and Luis are very open. If there's anything going on, he would have told me about it," Edu explains. "But I haven't heard anything from him so I'm sure it's nothing serious. Of course, I can't and will not speak for Luis. But from where I stand, it seems to be a non-issue."

Father's instinct is never farthest from the truth.

Ready to reconcile

Nadia Montenegro is willing to make peace with Gretchen Barretto. "Many of our common friends told me Greta has been saying nice things about me pati in her interviews pero iba siyempre pag face to face kami mag-usap," says Nadj. "I'm just waiting for the right time. Ayoko through other people. Hindi ako makikipagbati just to please others. Makikipag-ayos ako dahil gusto ko."

Knowing Greta and Nadj, their hearts are too soft to stay mad.

Not offended

EB Babe Liane remains unaffected by the remark of Tita Lolit Solis (manager of her BF Paolo Contis) that her romance with Pao won't last.

"I'm not offended. I understand and love her pa rin," says Liane. "Her opinion is a challenge for me and Pao to prove her wrong."

Prove so La Lolita will approve. But sometimes love is better when nobody understands.

Angel Locsin on the cover of the Maxim magazine.

'It' pair

The "It" love team of Kim Chiu and Gerald Anderson are out to show that they are each other's best partner in ABS-CBN's "Tayong Dalawa" (premieres tonight on the Prime Time Bida Block).

It's the first time Gerald portrays a "less-privileged" role and a man in uniform. Off-cam, Kim and Gerald turn into kids all over again. "'Pag serious ang scene, Gerald will tickle me during rehearsal take," says Kim, giggling.

Together, they will tickle your kilig sensation.

Good Samaritan

Neri Naig of ABS-CBN's Star Circle fame turned Good Samaritan when she came to the rescue of the downhearted contestants of the Miss Young International 2008 pageant, which turned out to be a scam. The NBI already arrested the event organizer for ripping off 21 young ladies from different countries.

"I really felt for them," said Neri. "They were in tears when I met them. They said it was their first decent meal since they arrived. We should not allow shady characters to ruin the reputation of our country."

A beauty saves beauties in distress. That's over and beyond the call of beauty, este, duty!

Loveless on Valentine's Day

Karylle has a full schedule but an empty heart. She's busy wrapping up her album, which includes two songs she composed for her ex-BF Dingdong Dantes when they were still a couple ("Minamahal Kita" and an untitled one).

K is also agog for her Valentine's show "That Magic Called Love" at Edsa Shangri-La lobby (Feb. 14, 8:30 p.m., with the Breakaway band). What song will she be singing for herself? "Leaving Yesterday Behind," K quips.

Fast forward. Who has a bigger chance to win her heart—Jericho Rosales or Christian Bautista?

"Honestly, I don't think anyone is courting me," says K. "Christian and I just spend a lot of time together because of 'ASAP' and we are both managed by Stages. I'm still letting my heart heal. I'll be loveless on V-day but I hope to get many gifts (laughs)."

K's heart is still under renovation. But the next possible occupant can take a hint.

First birthday

Too bad I missed the "Enchanted Forest" first birthday party of Gabby and Ginbee Concepcion's cute daughter Samantha at Polo Club last Jan 17. They are such a happy family three! According to Nadia Montenegro, KC Concepcion was at the fete.

"Ate na ate siya kay Sam," says Nadj, "pati sa ibang kapatid niya."

Ginbee tells me that just like Gabs, Sam likes being around people. "When we have a party, she doesn't want to be brought to the room even if she's sleepy na," the proud mom relates. "Gusto niya to be where the action is."

Gabs is excited to see Sam in her ad soon. Just like her dad, Sam's face will launch a thousand products.

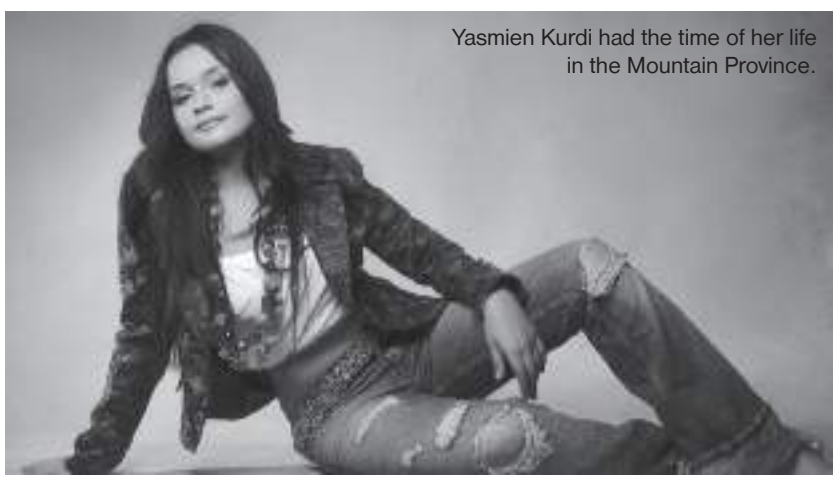
Mountain adventure

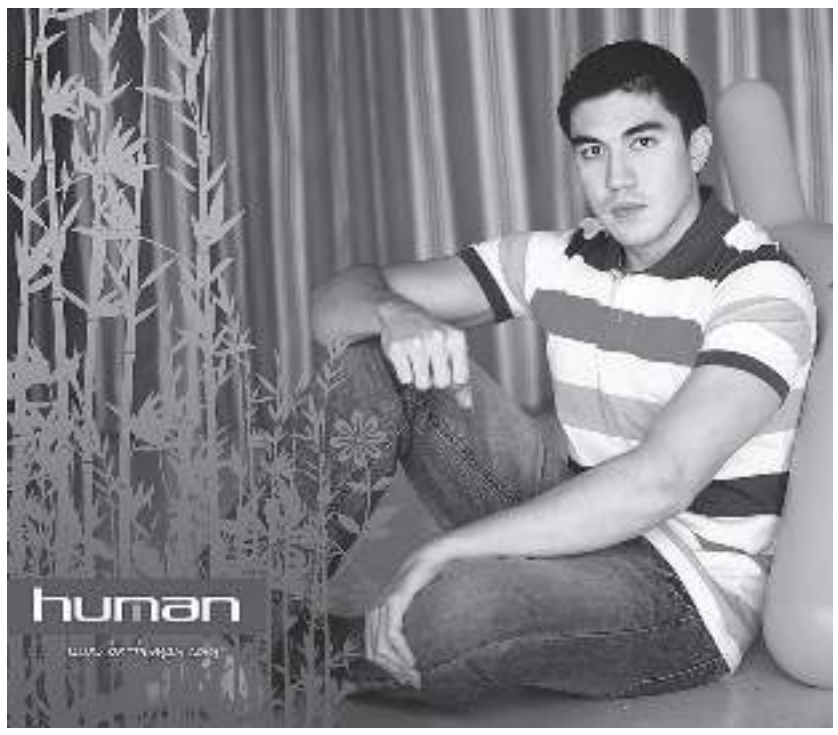
Birthday girl Yasmien Kurdi had the time of her life in the Mountain Province.

"I'll never forget the moment I entered Sumaging cave in Sagada 500 feet below," Yas recalls. "At first I wanted to give up because it was scary but my mom urged me on. We traveled two days through rough roads and stony peaks so there was no turning back."

Is her heart taking an adventure, too, with Dion Ignacio? "I don't want to presume he's courting me just because he's extra thoughtful," Yas says, blushing. "Maybe he's just sweet by nature."

When all else fails, sweetness prevails.


Yasmien Kurdi had the time of her life in the Mountain Province.



Luis Manzano in an ad for clothing brand Human.

Wherefore, 'Pinoy Idol'?

MANILA, Philippines—The latest ratings report on "American Idol" is that Season 8 was "launched [last week] with 10 percent fewer viewers than last year's opener."

This, the report noted, was "despite hoopla surrounding a new judge."

A case of audience fatigue? Is this the reason that GMA 7 has not confirmed the launch of "Pinoy Idol" Season 2?

Last year, "Pinoy Idol" auditions started Jan. 17, and airing commenced in April. It was effectively the second Philippine franchise of the world's most popular talent search. In 2007, the first local version of "American Idol" was aired on ABC 5 (now TV5) and was called "Philippine Idol."

Wilma Galvante, GMA 7 senior vice president for Entertainment, had no news about a new edition of "Pinoy Idol" when asked during a press conference last week for the network's show fare this year.

She said there were "learnings" about last year's search that were up for discussion with "Idol's" international production company, FremantleMedia.

Pressed, Galvante singled out the text-voting mechanics, saying, "It's different for [the Philippines]." She did not elaborate. But with or without "Pinoy Idol," Galvante said, a big talent search is up on the Kapuso channel. "We will revive 'Starstruck.'"

In any case, she said, the network was scheduled to sit down with Fremantle this week.

The "fewer" "American Idol" viewers last week still numbered 30.1 million for Fox network, "the biggest audience for any US television broadcast so far this season."

TV5 is reportedly prepared to snap up the franchise, should GMA 7 decide to pass up this year. Meanwhile, the clock ticks on. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer/Reuters)***

Two RP films top Berlin fest

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Two Filipino films won top prizes at the Asian Hot Shots festival held in Berlin Jan. 13 to 18. The news was relayed to Inquirer by Axel Estein, festival programmer.

The films, Francis Xavier Pasion's "Jay" and Mark V. Reyes' "God Only Knows," are products of Cinemalaya 2008.

"Jay" tied with Marc X. Grigoroff's "Salawati" from Singapore for Best Feature Film. In the Short Film race, "God Only Knows" was the sole winner.

The prizes are dubbed Green Chilies Audience Awards, explained Estein, because viewers pick the winners.

In an SMS, Pasion said, "I hope more Filipinos get to see it, too." A critique on a reality program's mishandling of the murder of a gay man, "Jay" will have a theatrical run in SM Cinemas starting Feb. 4.

The Best Feature Film winner in Cinemalaya, "Jay" previously won Special Mention prizes at the Bangkok and Bahamas film fests.

Set in Smokey Mountain, "God Only Knows" tells of a young mother torn between her son and her own hopes for life.

It won the Best Director and Audience Awards in last year's Cinemalaya; Best Short in the Asian Cinevision and Special Jury Mention in the Ojai (Ca.) Film Fest.

Maharlika – Opinyon

It takes an addict

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to don the robes of anti-drugs czar is an inspired one. At least in one respect, which is that she is in the best position to spot an addict, even if she is not in the best position to do something about it. The logic is simple, and brilliant. It takes a thief to catch a thief; it takes an addict to catch an addict.

GMA is an addict as much as the addicts she proposes to hunt down because:

An addict is someone who is hooked on drugs like shabu, cocaine, Ecstasy and the like. Forget marijuana, or doobie or jute as it's referred to these days, that shouldn't be in the list of dangerous drugs. Its inclusion merely replicates the banning of alcohol during the days of Prohibition in the United States, which succeeded only in producing moonshine and the Mafia. Alcohol and cigarettes are arguably far more dangerous, for the health of both the user and those around him, alcohol in particular having been known to induce violence and mayhem among barkadas. But I'll leave the groups proposing that marijuana be legalized to argue for it.

To go back: An addict is someone who is hooked on mind-altering substances and can't get rid of them. The drugs have consumed them, and they cannot live without them. When they cannot get their fix, they shake and convulse violently, and look as though they are going to die, which they probably will without it.

GMA is someone who is hooked on the drugs called Power and Pillage. They are the most mind-altering substances of all, and the most dangerous as testified to by all the oppressed peoples of the world.

The addiction to Pillage is easy to see, the World Bank itself saying the Philippines has become one of the most corrupt countries in Asia, if not the most corrupt, under her watch. Truly, you have to wonder at the enslaving effects of addiction. How much money do you really need to be happy? Or how much of that loot can she and her family use in 10 lifetimes? While a nation grovels in hunger: I still remember the street kids that looked at the display window of a tailoring shop and dreamt of owning the basketball T-shirts displayed there. The one is to other as cause is to effect. Yet it is in the nature of addiction to want more because of the sheer pleasure—no, the sheer ecstasy—of having more.

There's The Rub
By CONRADO DE QUIROS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The addiction to Power is even easier to see. After having ruled the longest among those who came after Marcos, and without once having been voted to power—at least Marcos was voted twice before he became dictator—she wants to rule some more. Shabu only lasts a day or so after sending its user on a power trip. This drug has lasted for eight years now, going on nine, without any trace of wearing off. It isn't just remarkable for its long-term effects, it is remarkable for its intense ones. Shabu makes the user think he is the devil's spawn, Power makes the user think she was sent here by God. Shabu makes the user think he can do everything, Power makes the user think she can do anything.

When GMA cannot get her fix, she shakes and convulses violently as though she is about to die, which she probably will without it.

An addict will go to any lengths to get his fix. He will lie, cheat and steal to get it.

He will lie about his addiction, swearing before others he does not take drugs and will never take drugs. Sometimes, he can get away with it because he is able to look normal and go about his daily functions routinely while getting the daily fix. Most other times, he doesn't particularly care whether he is believed or not, the level of his indifference or contempt for other people's opinion of him reaching stratospheric heights. That is particularly true of the latter stages of the addiction, when the user becomes a little more crazed and desperate and all veneer of normality and respectability disappears.

An addict will cheat his partner in life and partners in business, taking money from the family's budget for food, ripping off friends, reneging on contracts. And he will steal anything and everything to get the money to get the fix. Nothing is too low to stoop down to, nothing is too high a price to pay. It's a life of the damned, but one that makes everybody else miserable.

GMA will go to any lengths to get her fix. She will lie, cheat and steal to get it.

She has lied about her addiction, swearing before the world she is not taking Power and will never take Power. To prove that she said she would not run in 2004, and says she will not extend her term with Charter change. She did not do the first and will not do the second. Sometimes she is able to look normal and able to go about her daily routine, which is not hard if you are constantly away trying to look like a global statesperson. Most other times, she doesn't particularly care whether she is believed or not, the level or her contempt for her people's contempt of her reaching stratospheric heights. That was true from the very start but has gotten so much worse today, when she has become more crazed and desperate. Truly, Power is the most brain-addling substance of all.

Feel free to supply the cheating and stealing. My column is limited to only a thousand words.

An addict will not only deny his addiction, he will go on to accuse other people of it. GMA does not just deny she is addicted to Power, she accuses everybody else of it. Specifically, she accuses the "presidentiables" and the opposition of it, charging them with being power-mad and politicking while Rome burns or this country goes to hell. She has even appointed herself anti-drugs czar, pointing to others as the addicts she will obliterate from the face of this earth.

An addict will let the world crumble to dust first before he goes without a fix.

You think she won't?

Legaspi's wish list

Last Thursday, Jan. 23, was the anniversary of the Malolos Congress. I should be writing about history connected to Barasoain Church, but my weekend trip to Cebu province on the invitation of the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. led me to the narrative reports sent by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi from Cebu to the King of Spain in 1565. Most history students have, at some point, read the account of the Magellan expedition by its chronicler Antonio Pigafetta, but they seem to forget Legaspi and Urdaneta.

Looking Back
By AMBETH OCAMPO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Contrary to popular belief, the so-called "Spanish period" in Philippine history does not begin with Magellan's arrival in Cebu and his well-deserved death in the Battle of Mactan in 1521. Magellan may have planted a cross and left the Santo Niño with the wife of Humabon, but that is not a real "conquista" [conquest]. The Spanish dominion over the islands to be known as "Filipinas" began only in 1565, with the arrival of Legaspi. From Cebu, Legaspi moved to other populated and, we presume, important native settlements like Panay and later Maynila (not Maynilad as propagated by the ignorant).

Legaspi is often represented in art going through the Sandugo or Pacto de Sangre (Blood Compact) with Sikatuna. This is the historical basis for Philippine-Spanish friendship and diplomacy. It is also the basis for the Order of Sikatuna conferred by the Republic on diplomats. It is not well known that Magellan entered into a blood compact with Rajah Kolambu in 1521.

Spain is literally in our blood, in our culture. Juan Luna's iconic "Pacto de Sangre" hangs in Malacañang. Luna used the patrician Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera as the model for Legaspi and Jose Rizal for Sikatuna. A toast, an exchange of local wine mixed with blood, has also been immortalized by other Filipino artists, including National Artists Vicente Manansala, Carlos V. Francisco and Napoleon Abueva.

In all these representations of history a common error is made as to the source of the blood. For example, the late Blas Ople wrote, "One way of performing 'sandugo' is for both parties to offer a cup of wine, the mildest wine available. Each party then incises his/her arm and lets two to three drops of blood from the wound drip into his/her cup. They exchange cups. Each party then raises his/her cup to eye level, shakes the cup to mix the blood with the wine, and drinks from the cup. Preferably, bottoms up, for the eagerness to consume the mixture signifies the depth of each party's will and determination to honor the agreement until his/her death."

That is what we imagine the sandugo to be, but the incision is not made on the arm but on the chest! Legaspi's narration is very clear on this: The blood was drawn from the "pecho." We are perhaps confused by the drawing of blood for the Katipunan in the 19th century. An incision on the arm drew blood that they used to sign or write out K.K.K oaths.

Why is the mistake on Legaspi perpetuated? Few people today read his reports to the king. I would not have reread Legaspi if not for the controversy over the site of the Blood Compact. This was previously believed to have happened on the side of a road between present-day Tagbilaran and Baclayon in Bohol. As a matter of fact, a historical marker and a life-size tableau of the event marks the spot that has since been proven to be on the wrong side of history, because the site of the Legaspi-Sikatuna blood compact was Loay, Bohol.

Rereading Legaspi I almost skipped a rather detailed list of supplies requested for his camp in Cebu. His wish list was dispatched to Mexico and he arranged the items according to three types: supplies required for barter or gifts; military supplies needed for both defense and offense; supplies required for ships. The barter goods are quite revealing because it shows what he believed the natives needed or desired, as well as what he thought would attract the Chinese and Japanese:

"Two bolts of scarlet Valencia scarlet cloth, with odds and ends, 7 bolts of scarlet Toledo cloth, 6 cases of headdresses, a great quantity of beads, blue green and yellow, 10 breadths of each sort, 2 pcs. crimson velvet, 3 dozen colored hats, one case large gilded coins for the Chinese, 2 bales and 2 boxes linens, 2 quintals of Muzavetas (whatever that means), 4 lbs fine coral of all sorts, 3 quintals glass (one blue), 1,000 bundles glass bead —green and yellow, 500 dozen hawk's bells, coins and small bars of fine silver for trade in China, 6 caldrons pitch, 2 large caldrons, such as are used for bucking linen; but they must be large and very strong, because they are to be used in making saltpeter, 1,000 sail needles, 2 saddles with long stirrups and colored velvet trimmings, with all rivets, bits, and stirrup-irons to be gilded, 2 cavalry saddles with colored trimmings, all to be of good quality, 6 gilt swords and daggers of good quality which are for the S.S. on the coast of China and for those in the islands of Japan."

This now historical list may be trivial to most historians, but it makes us recreate the world of 1565 from the value placed on these items. From seemingly insignificant details history can be woven and be made relevant to our times.

EDITORIAL

More militarization

The sudden reshuffle of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet was unusual enough to provoke a testy response from an administration ally, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago. She said she found the reshuffle "very unusual" and thought it "speaks of troubled waters." She then offered what could justifiably be described as a revealing glimpse of inner-circle politics in Malacañang. "They can't get along with each other," Santiago said. "This is the way she calms the waters. She has to shift around, play musical chairs, but for me that's not a good sign."

Effective Feb. 1, the chair of the press secretary will be vacated by Jesus Dureza and rearranged by Cerge Remonde. Remonde's old post as chief of the Presidential Management Staff will be occupied by Hermogenes Esperon. And Esperon's position as presidential adviser on the peace process will now be Avelino Razon's to sit in. Dureza will serve as chief presidential legal counsel.

There are other appointments, including the still-uncertain detailing of Arturo Lomibao, head of the National Counterterrorism Action Group, to either the Land Transportation Office or the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, but it is Esperon's new posting that, in our view, explains the entire exercise.

To be sure, Esperon is not the only former four-star general and graduate of the Philippine Military Academy included in the new appointments: Both Razon and Lomibao once served as Philippine National Police chief under Ms Arroyo. But Esperon's forthcoming takeover of the PMS marks the first time in living memory that a former general heads the President's planning and policy hub.

Given that the Department of Public Works and Highways is under former four-star general Hermogenes Ebdane, the Department of Transportation and Communications is run by former four-star general Leandro Mendoza and the Department of Energy is headed by former four-star general Angelo Reyes, and given that the PMS serves as the President's project monitoring unit, the biggest of big-ticket items in the President's development plan now fall under the purview of former military men.

This is not to negate the high service these former generals (or at least some of them) have rendered to the public, but the presence of so many of them in the President's Cabinet sends the wrong signal about the Arroyo administration's understanding of the sources of democracy.

Civilian supremacy is a fundamental principle of democratic theory not simply because a nation's arms and its armed services must be under the ultimate control of civilians, but also because that's what a democracy means: government by the people, most of whom are civilians.

That President Arroyo, after eight years in power, cannot appoint outstanding civilians to the key positions involved in the latest reshuffle tells us much about her waning powers of suasion—and all we need to know about her increasing need for men used to following orders.

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Samu't Sari

Balik-Tanaw sa Kulturang Pinoy

Photos by REY BELGADO

The Bayani Association hosted a Filipino cultural show called Balik-Tanaw Sa Kulturang Pinoy last Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in Garapan, depicting 16 cultural dances and folk songs that highlighted the Filipinos regional culture, tradition and arts.

All the Filipino cultural dances shown at the event Cordillera, Rural, Maria Clara, Tribal and Muslim were choreographed by Joel Vallega and modified to suit the performer s capabilities without losing the identity of a particular dance. Here are pictures from the event:

Youngstyle

Readers tell Obama daughters what to see and where to go

THE WASHINGTON POST

Sasha Obama jumps up on a block so she has a good vantage point for her father's swearing-in. At right is her sister Malia. As a way to make the girls feel welcome in Washington, KidsPost asked readers to tell Malia and Sasha the best things for kids to see and do around town.

Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States on Tuesday. On Wednesday morning, Obama's daughters, 10-year-old Malia and 7-year-old Sasha, woke up in the White House for the first time.

They will call the presidential mansion home for the next four, and perhaps eight, years. As a way to make the girls feel welcome in their new home town, KidsPost asked readers to tell Malia and Sasha the best things for kids to see and do around town. Here are some of the top suggestions we received.

The National Aquarium (in Baltimore). At the National Aquarium you can see all the fish in the world. It's incredible how the divers go near sharks. How come the sharks don't eat them?

— Jabrail, 9

A really cool thing you can do in Washington is go to a Wizards game and sit at the Acela level (Acela level is (a) club and nice dining level).

— Charlotte, 11

If I could spend a day with you in Washington, D.C., I would show you the Washington Monument. It's tall.

— Elijah, 8

A perfect day ... would start out by going to Trio, my favorite restaurant in Dupont Circle. Trio serves the best breakfast in D.C. We would eat pancakes and bacon and sit in the outdoor cafe and watch the crowds.

From there, I would take them to go see "The Awakening," a statue of a sleepy giant coming out from under the ground, at the National Harbor just across the river in Maryland. It is fun because you can climb all over the giant and you can sit in his mouth. ... We would go the Kennedy Center to see a play and end the day by going back to Trio because they have great dinner there, too.

— Tripp, 11

I like paddle boating by the Tidal Basin. I also like seeing the Thomas Jefferson Memorial when we pass it on our paddle boats.

— Varsha, 8

The Museum of Natural History. There are lots of dinosaur bones there. There is also an insect zoo with a tarantula.

— Sonny, 9

The National Postal Museum. It's the funnest place I've ever been to.

— Erin, 9

The National Zoo. We would have so much fun. I can imagine it now. We would see bears, tigers, elephants, gorillas and pandas. We could walk along the paths up and down the hills of the zoo, stopping to observe the animals. ... Then we'll go back to the White House and ask the chef to make us some Baked Alaska and lobster.

— Brian, 10

Must-sees are Great Falls (and) the Einstein Memorial. They are all very wonderful. The Einstein is very fun to climb on and you guys would love it!

— Sarah, 10

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WHITE HOUSE FAMILY FACT

President Gerald Ford's daughter, Susan, said this about living in the White House: "It's like a fairy tale. The people you meet—the kings, queens and movie stars. ... The first time my friends visited me, they were probably impressed, but they got used to it."

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Things to do before age 10

Are you hitting the big 1-0 this year? Reaching double digits is a time for any self-respecting kid to look at his life and say, "What have I done with my first decade?"

Here are suggestions of things all kids should have tried before their 10th birthday. How many have you done? How much time do you have to get the rest done? If you're looking for more ideas, check out two great books: "The Dangerous Book for Boys" and "The Daring Book for Girls." And remember, have fun: That's what being a kid is really all about.

- Feed a farm animal.
- Pick strawberries.
- Recognize five bird species.
- Find worms.
- Ride a bike through a puddle.
- Make and fly a kite.
- Plant a tree.
- Build a nest out of grass and twigs.
- Find 10 different leaves in the park.
- Make breakfast in bed for your parents.
- Create an obstacle course in your garden.
- Roll on your side down a grassy bank.
- Make your own modeling dough.
- Make perfume from flower petals.
- Make a papier-mache mask.
- Make a painting using your hands and feet.
- Organize your own teddy bear picnic.
- Bury a friend in the sand.
- Bake bread.
- Make snow angels.
- Camp out.

Source: KOL

Not so fast: Play sports when you're ready

By FRED BOWEN
*Special to the*Washington Post

A recent newspaper article has me thinking about what is the best age for kids to start playing sports.

The New York Times reported that a new world golf champion has been crowned. His name is Brett Sodetz. He is 3 feet 10 inches tall, weighs 50 pounds and was 6 years old when he beat 82 kids from 12 countries to win his age group in the U.S. Kids Golf World Championship.

Kids are starting to play sports at younger ages. I receive notices for soccer camps for 3-year-olds. A friend's 5-year-old son has been invited to play on a T-ball team this spring. And it seems as if almost every kid is playing on some team by the first grade.

KIDS SPORTS FACT

Golf great Tiger Woods began playing at age 2 and was featured in Golf Digest at age 5.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Kids sports get very serious very quickly. For example, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) sponsors a national basketball championship for boys and girls younger than 8 years old.

Recently, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the group that makes the rules for college sports, said college coaches couldn't try to get seventh- and eighth-grade players to agree to play later for their college basketball teams.

I coached kids for years. I think it's important for kids to be active and play sports. But when kids are young—say, 6 to 9 years old—they should play more games at the park or in their own back yard than in organized leagues.

Brett Sodetz

The idea of having a national or world championship for 6- and 7-year-olds or recruiting 12- and 13-year-olds for college basketball is a little crazy.

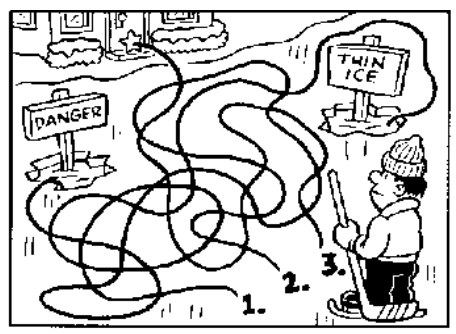
I know some folks say that kids have to sign up for organized teams at a young age or they will fall behind the other kids. I've even had parents tell me it's "too late" for their kids to start playing team sports because they are 10 years old.

That's silly. What secret skill does a kid learn playing a sport when he is 5 to 9 years old that a 10-year-old can't learn very quickly? If the 10-year-old is a decent athlete who wants to learn and play the game, she will catch up quickly.

So the best age for kids to start playing sports is when they really want to play. That may be 6 or 12 or any time in between. But remember, sports are not just the games with uniforms and referees. Pickup basketball games, playing catch with a friend or soccer matches where the goals are shirts on the ground are sports, too.

And remember you can always enjoy playing sports even if you are not a world champion at 6 years old.

Fred Bowen is an author of sports novels for kids.



A FROSTY CHOICE! Can you guess which route Tom should take to get off this dangerous ice?

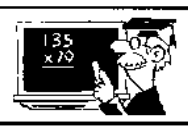
Answer: Number 3 is the one that will lead to a hot cocoa by the fireplace.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

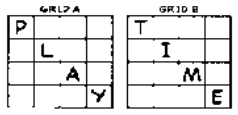
Illustrated by David Coulson

SHOOTING HIGH! Professor Flunkum gives you one minute to rearrange the five numbers on the board so that, when mulitplied, you will get the highest possible result.



Answer 751 x 93 = 69,843

IT'S RECESS TIME! Pictured below are two puzzle grids for you to fill in. Hints are given for each word. The words in Grid B contain the same letters as the corresponding words in Grid A.

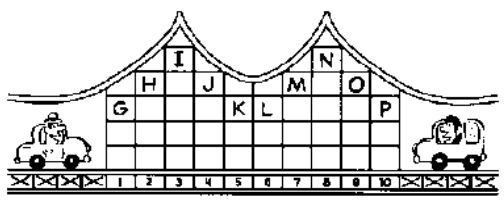


1. A portion of.
2. Moved across ice.
3. Something you eat.
4. Depend on for help.

1. Found under sink.
2. Found on boxes.
3. A bad excuse.
4. Greek harp.

Answers: 1. Part-ner 2. Slid-ing 3. Meal-time 4. Rely-on

A WORD BRIDGE



The bridge on the left contains 10 supporting words. We give you the first letter of each word, plus plenty of hints below.

1. An African antelope.
2. A saintly sign.
3. A lazy person.
4. Part of a window frame.
5. A means of access.
6. Disappears when you get up.
7. A magician.
8. Lacking in worldliness.
9. A formal promise to do something.
10. More than one picture.

Answers: 1. Gnu 2. Halo 3. Idler 4. Jamb 5. Key 6. Lap 7. Magi 8. Naive 9. Oath 10. Pix

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Where there's a will...

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Is it possible to include a pet in your will? I saw all the controversy about Leona Helmsley's dog inheriting her money on TV. I'm not rich at all, but I do want my two Chihuahuas and my parakeet "Bobby" to be well cared for if I should pass before them.—Beryl in Ormond Beach, Fla.

DEAR BERYL: It is possible and, in fact, recommended. The American Pet Products Manufacturers Association estimates that 69 percent of American households own at least one pet. Of the 2.4 million Americans who die each year, statistically, many of those who pass away are pet owners.

Even if we aren't wealthy, we still leave stuff behind when we die, including (and especially) pets. Adding a pet to your will is important—it's less about leaving the pet your money as it is about making sure a pet will be cared for after you're gone.

The online estate-planning service ItsMyLife.com (www.itsmylife.com) recommends that pets be protected in writing, as part of your will. Verbal agreements can easily be forgotten.

The company is offering its "Pets Letter of Wishes" for free through Valentine's Day, and its other estate-planning documents are available at a reasonable price.

You don't have to go through a service—you can add a provision for your pet in your existing will, or create a will, simply by writing out your wishes on paper and having a witness agree to and sign it. But I recommend an attorney look over any will, regardless of how or where it was made, to make sure it can be carried out with few problems.

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It was American science-fiction author John Thomas Sladek who made the following observation: "The future, according to some scientists, will be exactly like the past, only far more expensive."

■ Although they're not as much in fashion these days as they have been in the past, you certainly know what sideburns are—but you may not know where the term came from. It seems that Ambrose Everett Burnside was a rather indifferent general for the Union Army during the Civil War, suffering a disastrous defeat at the Battle of Fredericksburg. Despite his lack of military genius, however, he was rather notorious—for the enormous bushy facial hair he wore. Eventually his last name, slightly morphed, became the generic word for such a pattern of facial hair.

■ In Germany, police officers often use pigs rather than dogs to sniff out illegal drugs such as marijuana.

■ Those who study such things say that on average, Americans over the age of 60 catch less than one cold per year.

■ The first woman to be featured on the cover of BusinessWeek magazine was Brownie Wise, the creator of the Tupperware party. This was back in 1954.

■ If you've never seen an example of Leptotyphlops carlae, don't be surprised—the species of threadsnake seems to be found only on the Caribbean island of Barbados. The animal's claim to fame is that it is the world's smallest snake, measuring only 4 inches long when fully grown and achieving a girth about that of a spaghetti noodle.

■ Consumers in India purchase more gold than those of any other country in the world.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "War will never cease until babies begin to come into the world with larger cerebrums and smaller adrenal glands."—H.L. Mencken

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MAGIC MAZE ● STATE FAIR CITIES

C Y W T K R P M K I F D B Y W
U S Q B T C O M X K I F D B Z
X W U A S N O S N I H C T U H
S Q M N P E R R Y O N O D N L
J P H G F D N C E A S E Y W V
A T S O Q R P I N L T K O L K
I S H R E V E P O R T H C H F
E C B M M U I N O M I T Z A P
Y W L V U S R I O Q S P I N J
M A D N A L T U R P U E B L O
P L J I H F E D A I L A D E S

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Bangor	Jackson	Phoenix	Shreveport
Des Moines	Little Rock	Pueblo	Tampa
Detroit	Palmer	Rutland	Timonium
Hutchinson	Perry	Sedalia	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The dea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	x		+		19
+		x		÷	
	–		x		15
x		–		+	
	x		+		14
14		2		11	

1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 9

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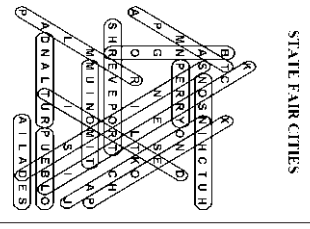
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

5	x	2	+	9	19
+	9	–	1	x	15
÷		x		+	
9	–	1	x	3	14
x		+		8	14
1	x	6	+	8	11

Launch 2009 savings with airplane bank

Motivate your kids to take off on a personal 2009 savings plan with clever airplane banks that you can make together using items from the recycle bin. And while you design and build your aircraft, use the informal time together to talk a little "finances 101."

Most kids have no doubt overheard conversations around the house or seen the headlines of the paper about the serious economic challenges we are facing at home and abroad. Encourage your kids to ask questions that are on their minds, and offer your insight on basic finances, including the importance of saving some of the money they receive from gifts, jobs and their allowance. That's where their banks come in.

Let's get started!

First, start saving containers, plastic bottle caps and other household supplies, then decide on an afternoon or evening to repurpose the items into the decorative banks. Here's how:

■ Cover a clean cylindrical cardboard chip container, such as Pringles brand, with self-adhesive-backed paper, or paint it with nontoxic acrylic or tempera paints.

■ Cut out pieces of cardboard or foam core, 16 inches by 2 1/2 inches, for the side wings and 7 inches by 1 1/2 inches for the tail. An adult should cut two slits 2 inches from the can opening on opposite sides of the container to fit the wings and two more, close to the bottom of the can, for the tail. Insert the two cutout pieces through the slits. Cut a slit large enough for quarters to fit through on the top of the airplane between the wings and tail.

■ For a tail fin: Cut out a 1-1/2-inch-by-2-1/2-inch triangle. Cut a slit on top of the can above the tail wing. Insert the fin with narrow point upward. Trim off the point.

■ For the propeller: cut out a figure-eight shape from cardboard or foam core. Attach to the center of the can lid with a brass fastener. Or, use a craft stick and attach to the lid with a small screw.

■ For wheels: Glue a plastic milk-jug cap on each end of a 4-inch dowel. Glue dowel to the bottom of the plane. Decorate with stickers and cutouts.

"The grandkids are coming!" tip:

Give your grandchild practical life lessons by taking him or her with you on errands around town. For example, when you are at the bank and use an ATM machine or cash a check, explain that the money comes out of an account of money you have saved.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

'Button' rules Oscars, Batman's a bridesmaid

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" is the Academy Awards heavyweight with 13 nominations, yet the shadow of Batman loomed large with the absence of "The Dark Knight" in the best-picture race.

An epic romance that earned a best-actor nomination for Brad Pitt and a directing spot for David Fincher, "Benjamin Button" was joined in the best-picture category Thursday by the Richard Nixon tale "Frost/Nixon," the chronicle of gay-rights leader Harvey Milk in "Milk," the Holocaust-themed drama "The Reader" and the rags-to-riches crowd-pleaser "Slumdog Millionaire."

The Batman blockbuster "The Dark Knight" had picked up so much momentum from honors by Hollywood trade unions that awards watchers generally thought it would land a best-picture nomination.

"Benjamin Button" producer Frank Marshall said "it was a bit of a surprise" that his movie would not be competing with "The Dark Knight" for the top prize.

"The fact that `The Dark Knight' did so well at the box office was probably a good thing and maybe a not-so-good thing," Marshall said. "People tend to think films as successful as that are not well made, but certainly, 'Dark Knight' is exceptionally well made."

As expected, "Dark Knight" co-star Heath Ledger earned a supporting-actor nomination on the one-year anniversary of his death from an accidental overdose of prescription drugs. If Ledger wins, he would become only the second actor to receive an Oscar posthumously, following Peter Finch, the best-actor recipient for 1976's "Network."

Josh Brolin, competing against Ledger with a supporting-actor nomination for "Milk," said the acclaim for Ledger was bittersweet.

"It's too bad, because every time I think of Heath, I'm split down the middle," Brolin said.

AP

In this image released by Paramount Pictures, Taraji P. Henson and Mahershalalhashbaz Ali are shown in a scene from, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." Henson was nominated for an Academy Award for best supporting actress, Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009, for her role in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."

"I think of his performance. I think of the work that he's done, and then the fact that this tragedy happened. It's an uncomfortable situation, for sure, but it makes sense to me, because I thought he did a bang-out job."

"The Dark Knight" picked up seven other nominations for technical achievement, among them cinematography and visual effects. Yet it missed out on other major categories, including directing and screenplay. The directors and writers guilds both had nominated "The Dark Knight" for their top honors, while the Producers Guild of America nominated it for the year's best film.

"Benjamin Button" leads a bold batch of best-picture candidates, among them Golden Globes champ "Slumdog Millionaire," which came in second at the Oscars with 10 nominations.

Based on an F. Scott Fitzgerald story, "Benjamin Button" stars Pitt as a man aging backward toward infancy, caught in a tragic romance with the love of his life (Cate Blanchett) as she ages in the opposite direction.

The Oscars will be a family affair for Pitt, whose romantic partner Angelina Jolie has a best-actress nomination for the missing-child drama "Changeling."

The honors for "Benjamin Button" include a directing nomination for David Fincher and supporting actress for Taraji P. Henson, playing the black foster mother who raises Pitt's wizened white character.

"What I identified with on the first reading was, she understands love and how unconditional it is and should be. At the beginning of the film, she's barren and can't have children, then stumbles on this funny-looking creature on her doorstep," Henson said. "She's able to look past race and how odd he looked. She just knew he was a human being."

Marshall and producing partner Kathleen Kennedy spent 18 years trying to make "Benjamin Button" and have been rewarded with a critical and commercial hit as the film crossed $100 million at the box office last weekend.

The film is "about perseverance, about life, about how you can control your own destiny. That's kind of what happened here. Finally, a time came when all the right people came together at the right time to make the movie," Marshall said. "Live your life forward or backward, we just hope you live it well. Now to have the audience respond to the movie has been thrilling."

"Slumdog Millionaire" has found similar acceptance, its poor-boy-makes-good theme mirroring its success among fans and critics.

Shot on a modest $14 million budget, "Slumdog Millionaire" tells the alternately heartwarming and horrific tale of a street orphan in Mumbai whose pursuit of love carries him to triumph on India's version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

"Slumdog Millionaire" swept all four categories for which it was nominated at the Golden Globes, where it won best-picture over a field that included "Benjamin Button." The film's cast of unknowns was overlooked for acting nominations, but its Oscar categories include best-director for Danny Boyle and adapted screenplay for Simon Beaufoy.

"I just have to keep remembering that the film nearly went straight to DVD," Beaufoy said, referring to a distribution hitch that nearly left the film without a theatrical run to qualify for the Oscars. "There was a week or two when it might never have appeared on a big screen in the United States, and the fact that it did, and Americans have taken it to their hearts is just fantastic."

The best-picture field includes two 1970s tales of fallen political figures. "Frost/Nixon" stars best-actor nominee Frank Langella as the disgraced president in his battle of wits with TV interviewer David Frost. "Milk" features best-actor contender Sean Penn as the slain gay-rights pioneer.

Along with Langella, Penn and Pitt, best-actor picks are Richard Jenkins in the cross-cultural drama "The Visitor" and Mickey Rourke in the sports-comeback story "The Wrestler."

Joining Jolie in the best-actress field were Anne Hathaway for the family drama "Rachel Getting Married," Melissa Leo for the smuggling saga "Frozen River," Meryl Streep for the Roman Catholic tale "Doubt" and Kate Winslet for "The Reader."

Winslet plays a woman having a fling with a teenager who encounters her again years later as she is on trial for Holocaust atrocities.

At the Globes, Winslet was a dual winner, as dramatic actress for "Revolutionary Road" and supporting actress for "The Reader." But the Academy saw Winslet's turn in "The Reader" as a leading role, and one worthy of nomination.

It was Winslet's sixth nomination. If she loses, she will tie the record of Deborah Kerr and Thelma Ritter for most nominations by an actress without a win. Stephen Daldry, a directing nominee for "The Reader," suspects Winslet will be going home with an Oscar.

"I'm delighted for Kate," Daldry said. "I think she did two astonishing performances in 'Revolutionary Road' and in 'The Reader.' Whichever one the academy went for, I think it's her year. I think it's her turn."

The 81st Oscars will be presented Feb. 22 at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre and broadcast on ABC.

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Underworld 3: Rise of the Lycans

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:40
Saturday	1:15	4:10	7:10	9:40
Sunday	1:15	4:10	7:10	
Mon and Tues		4:10	7:10	

Michael Sheen, Bill Nighy
Thriller, Romance • Rated R

Synopsis
Depicts the origins of the centuries-long blood feud between two powerful and immortal tribes, the aristocratic Vampires, known as Death Dealers, and the barbaric Lycans, a line of fierce werewolves.

Inkheart

Friday		4:05	7:25	9:45
Saturday	1:20	4:05	7:25	9:45
Sunday	1:20	4:05	7:25	
Mon and Tues		4:05	7:25	

Brendan Fraser, Helen Mirren
Adventure, Fantasy • Rated PG

Synopsis
Mortimer "Mo" Folchart and his 12-year-old daughter, Meggie, share a passion for books. What they also share is an extraordinary gift for bringing characters from books to life when they read aloud. But there is a danger: when a character is brought to life from a book, a real person disappears into its pages. On one of their trips to a secondhand book shop, Mo hears voices he hasn't heard for years, and when he locates the book they're coming from, it sends a shiver up his spine.

★ ★ ★

Paul Blart, Mall Cop

Friday		4:20	7:05	10:00
Saturday	1:05	4:20	7:05	10:00
Sunday	1:05	4:20	7:05	
Mon and Tues		4:20	7:05	

Kevin James, Jayma Mays
Comedy • Rated PG

Synopsis
A single, suburban dad tries to make ends meet as a security officer at a New Jersey mall. It's a job he takes very seriously, though no one else does. When Santa's helpers at the mall stage a coup, shutting down the megaplex and taking hostages (Paul's daughter and sweetheart among them), Jersey's most formidable mall cop will have to become a real cop to save the day.

My Bloody Valentine

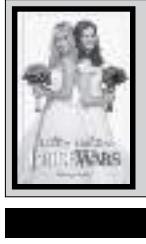
Friday		4:30	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:25	4:30	7:15	9:55
Sunday	1:25	4:30	7:15	
Mon and Tues		4:30	7:15	

Jaime King, Tom Atkins
Horror • Rated R

Hotel For Dogs

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:35
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:35
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Mon and Tues		4:00	7:00	

Emma Roberts, Don Cheadle
Comedy, Children • Rated PG



Bride Wars

Friday		4:15	7:30	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:15	7:30	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:15	7:30	
Mon and Tues		4:15	7:30	

Kate Hudson, Anne Hathaway
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG

Unborn

Friday		4:25	7:20	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:25	7:20	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:25	7:20	
Mon and Tues		4:25	7:20	

Gary Oldman, Odette Yustman
Thriller, Supernatural • Rated PG 13

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Requests flood in for 'Queen of Soul's' custom hat

DETROIT (AP)—The calls began to flood Luke Song's hat shop not long after Aretha Franklin finished belting out "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" at President Barack Obama's inauguration.

Franklin, who wore a gray felt custom-designed hat from Mr. Song Millinery, has inadvertently caused an economic boom for the South Korean immigrant's store.

Song said he wasn't prepared for the hundreds of calls requesting the hat with a Swarovski rhinestone-bordered bow.

"We even have a lot of men calling to get it for their wives, mothers and grandmothers," Song said.

The hat worn by the "Queen of Soul" was hand-molded and would cost upward of $500—if it were for sale, the 36-year-old designer said. Customers instead were offered a satin ribbon version for $179.

"They want the same hat, but they understand it's for the 'Queen' only," he said. "Ninety-nine percent said, 'That's fine. I'll get the next best thing.'"

The family millinery has been in Detroit for about 25 years, and Franklin has been a customer for about 20 of those years. The store also sells to about 500 boutiques across the country.

"We always make hats for her for high-profile events, so for us, the inauguration really was no big deal," Song told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The design for Franklin's hat came from two different hats at the store.

"She walked through the shop and said 'I want that bow (put) on that hat,'" he said. "She had the coat already, but she needed the hat to set it off."

AP

Aretha Franklin performs at the swearing-in ceremony at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Tuesday.

CNN *online traffic tops on Inauguration Day*

NEW YORK (AP)—On Inauguration Day—one of the highest traffic days ever for the Internet—CNN came out on top.

The CNN Digital Network was the no. 1 online destination among current events and global news sites, according to the research firm Nielsen Online. It had 11 million unique visitors on Tuesday when Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th president. The MSNBC Digital Network followed with 10 million unique visitors and Yahoo! News took the No. 3 spot with 9.1 million. Rounding out the top five was the Fox News Digital Network and AOL News.

For its webcast, CNN partnered with Facebook to supply status updates from one's friends on the social networking site. CNN.com earlier said it served more than 21.3 million streams globally that day between 6 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. EST.—the most in its history by far.

The Associated Press provided 8 million live video streams through its online video services. The AP launched its ad-supported Online Video Network in late 2006.

Traffic also soared on Whitehouse.gov, which debuted a redesign at the time Obama took the oath of office. It drew 1.3 million unique visitors, according to Nielsen Online.

Prosecution rests in Phil Spector murder retrial

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prosecutors rested their case Thursday in the murder retrial of legendary music producer Phil Spector.

The final prosecution witness was Donna Clarkson, mother of 40-year-old actress Lana Clarkson, who died of a gunshot through the mouth at Spector's mansion in February 2003. It ended nine weeks of testimony.

Donna Clarkson testified about spending her last day with her daughter shoe-shopping for Lana Clarkson's job as a hostess at the House of Blues nightclub. Her daughter died the next morning.

Clarkson said her daughter hoped to return to acting in movies and TV. Clarkson made a splash in the '80s as the star of the cult film "Barbarian Queen."

Spector, 69, is famed for his "Wall of Sound" recording technique and hit songs including, "To Know Him is to Love Him" and "Be My Baby." His first trial ended in a jury deadlock in 2007.

Spector attorney Doron Weinberg planned to begin the defense case Monday. He said outside court that his presentation should take about three weeks, concluding in February. The first trial lasted five months.

Spector

Weinberg has asked to take the jury to Spector's Alhambra home, known as "The Castle." Superior Court Judge Larry Paul Fidler has not ruled yet on whether the visit will be allowed.

The defense claims that Clarkson, down on her luck and despondent about her future, pulled the trigger on the gun that killed her. The prosecution maintains that Spector shot her to death in the foyer of his home.

Testimony at the second trial has mirrored the basic facts presented the first time around but has featured a different defense approach from Weinberg, who is new to the case and working without other lawyers. The first trial had a defense team of five and was marked by discord among lawyers.

After the first jury hung 10-2 with the majority favoring conviction, Spector's original defense team departed and he hired Weinberg, a well-reputed San Francisco lawyer.

Panettiere

Hayden Panettiere's dad pleads to battery

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hayden Panettiere's father has received two years of informal probation after pleading no contest to hitting his wife.

Records show Alan Panettiere entered the plea on Tuesday in Beverly Hills. He was arrested in August on suspicion of hitting his wife, who is also the "Heroes" star's mother. He was later charged with misdemeanor spousal battery.

A judge ordered Panettiere to attend a yearlong domestic violence treatment program, pay a $400 fine and serve two years of summary probation, which does not require supervision by an officer.

Empire State stuntman gets 3 years of probation

NEW YORK (AP)—A former television show host who tried to parachute off the Empire State Building was sentenced Thursday to probation and community service for the stunt.

State Supreme Court Justice Thomas Farber gave Jeb Corliss three years' probation and 100 hours of community service. He also said Corliss, of Malibu, Calif., could fulfill the probation and community service requirements in his home state.

Corliss was arrested when he tried to parachute from the 86th-floor observation deck of the 102-story Manhattan landmark in April 2006. Security guards thwarted his stunt when they grabbed him through the bars of a fence he had scaled.

Jurors convicted him on a misdemeanor charge of reckless endangerment. He faced up to a year in jail.

The judge said Thursday that he received letters from police Commissioner Raymond Kelly and the owners of the Empire State Building asking for a jail sentence for Corliss.

In explaining the reasoning behind the sentence, Farber noted the offense was a misdemeanor, that Corliss had no criminal record and that the prosecution had offered a non-jail plea deal before trial.

"I simply don't find it warranted in this case," the judge said.

Woman's idea of fun may earn her a bad reputation

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: Is it possible to be a slut and still be a virgin? I am 20, and I am good at attracting boys, but I'm still a virgin because I have never had an actual relationship.

I "hook up" with many guys, sometimes two in the same weekend. I bring them home from parties, but they aren't strangers. I know them from school.

Since my best friends and I moved into our apartment, I have brought five different guys home with me, but I have not had sex with any of them. The other day, one of my friends told me I'd better be careful that I don't get a reputation. I was surprised because I thought you had to actually have sex with a lot of people in order to get a bad reputation. I'm just having fun. What do you think?

HAVING FUN IN VIRGINIA

DEAR HAVING FUN: It depends upon what you mean by "fun." If your definition of fun is doing "everything but," then the person who warned you about you getting a reputation has a point -- eventually you will get a reputation.

However, if all you and these guys are doing is hanging out, then I'd say the person who warned you may be jealous. It reminds me of the saying, "A 'slut' is anyone who is more popular than me."

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm a man in my 60s, and my health isn't the greatest. My son "Dan" asked me to move in with him, but I'm reluctant. I spent some time with his girlfriend, "Twylla," when they lived with me for six months, and the entire time all she did was complain to me about my "no-good son." During that "visit" she never lifted a finger to do dishes, clean her room or even prepare a meal for herself.

I can still take care of myself, but I'm not able to take care of Twylla. Last night she phoned me screaming and crying because Dan went to his friend's house without her. I told her if she didn't like the way he treated her, to go home to Mommy and Daddy. When she called them, they told her Dan is entitled to a night out with his male friends. (They told me about it.) I told her father to come and get her if she thinks my son is abusing her.

I like Twylla when she's not complaining, but I need a polite way to tell her to shut up. Dan works 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, and deserves to relax. He has had to call the police about her; they locked her in the psych ward because she took pills and tried to commit suicide.

I want to spend time with my son and grandson, but I need some rules for Twylla's conduct before moving in with them. What do you suggest?

AT A LOSS IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR AT A LOSS: You need more than a polite way to tell your son's girlfriend to "shut up." You need to think again about moving into their home, which would be a stressful environment.

If you move in, Twylla will expect you to continue your assigned role as her parent, housekeeper, confidant and referee as she dumps her complaints (real or imagined) about your son on you. Twylla may be a nice girl when she's in her right mind, but it appears her mental health is fragile. If you were in good health, my advice might be different. But as things stand, the stress could cause your health to deteriorate further.

Because you would like to spend more time with your son, my advice is to stay close to them—but in your own place. That way you'll have some refuge and respite, and so will Dan.

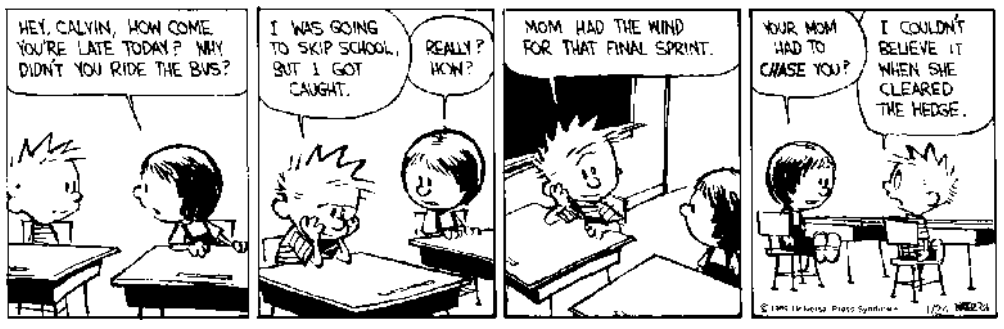
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

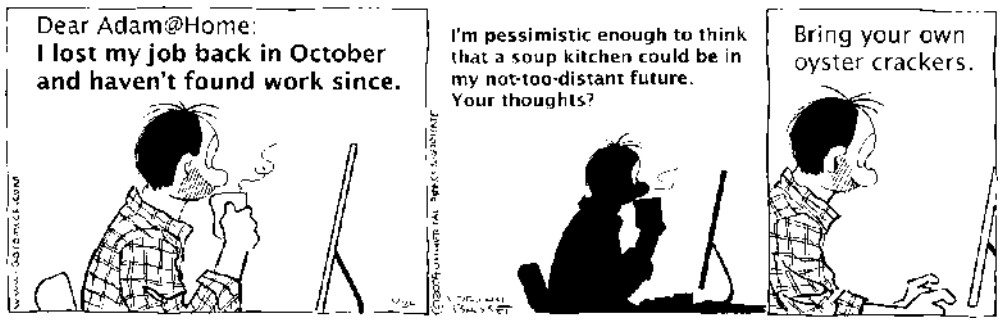

HEY, CALVIN, HOW COME YOU'RE LATE TODAY? WHY DIDN'T YOU RIDE THE BUS?
I WAS GOING TO SKIP SCHOOL, BUT I GOT CAUGHT.
REALLY? HOW?
MOM HAD THE WIND FOR THAT FINAL SPRINT.
YOUR MOM HAD TO CHASE YOU?
I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN SHE CLEARED THE HEDGE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


Dear Adam@Home:
I lost my job back in October and haven't found work since.
I'm pessimistic enough to think that a soup kitchen could be in my not-too-distant future. Your thoughts?
Bring your own oyster crackers.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

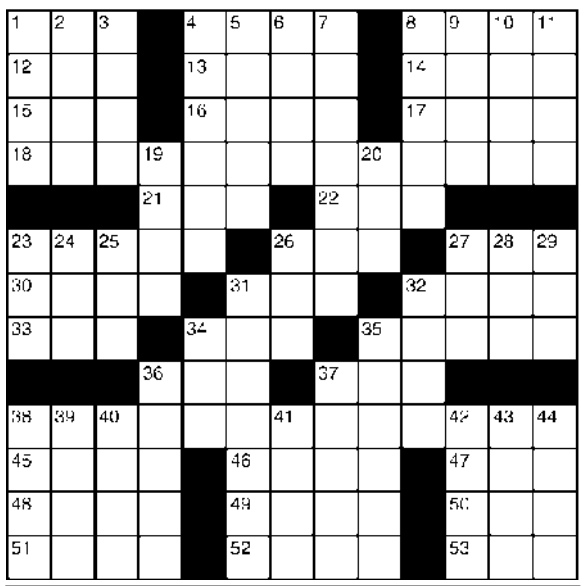
ACROSS
1 Deluge refuge
4 Mamet's "Speed-the- —"
8 Ragamuffin
12 "Humbug!"
13 South American cap tal
14 "Little Caesar" role
15 Longoria or Mendes
16 Writer Martin
17 One with a huge fan base
18 Draw a — (set limits)
21 Cincinnati trio?
22 Make lace
23 Erected
26 PETA concern
27 Dave's rival
30 Sends out invitations
31 High-arc shot
32 Links warning
33 Dundee denial
34 Throttle
35 Regions
36 First in a horror film franchise
37 Intimidate
38 Mid-grid
45 Farm fraction
46 Needle case
47 Trigger's passenger
48 Fervor
49 Santa —, Calif.
50 One of Tarzan's clique
51 Advantage
52 Detail. for short
53 Proof abbr.

DOWN
1 First victim
2 Sitarist Shankar
3 "Star Trek II" v llain
4 Lamentation
5 Describes
6 Leave out
7 Jug band's bass, basically
8 Bracelet s te
9 Verdi opera
10 PC picture
11 Do origami
19 Unagi, at a sushi bar
20 Audiologist's concern
23 Proscribe
24 Alternative to TNT or TBS
25 2008 hurricane
26 Visib lity hindrance
27 Garfield's owner
28 "All the Things You —"
29 Sycophant's reply
31 Bar tenders?
32 Chicks and ducks and geese
34 In high spirits
35 High signs?
36 Stone marker
37 Small vessel for liquids
38 Discon-cert
39 On the rocks
40 Assault a CO, maybe
41 On
42 Mosul is there
43 "Unh-unh"
44 Ogled

Solution time: 27 mins.

S	P	A		O	P	S		C	R	I	E	S
T	O	G		D	I	P		O	P	I	N	E
O	U	R		E	C	O	N	O	M	I	S	T
I	C	E		S	K	O	A	L				
C	H	E	W		E	R	R		W	A	D	E
			O	P	T		Z	I	R	C	O	N
A	N	G	L	E			F		E	N	D	
C	O	N	F	A	B		A	S	S			
T	P	U	F		A	.	I		˜	O	P	F
				B	L	O	C	K		M	A	X
S	A	T	Y	R	I	C	O	N		E	T	A
A	T	S	E	A		A	V	E		G	E	L
P	E	P	P	Y		_	E	E		A	H	I

Yesterday's answer 1-24



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Mischa Barton, 23; Tatyana Ali, 30; Nastassia Kinski, 50; Neil Diamond, 68

Happy Birthday: Picking a balance that works for you will bring success. There is money to be made and, with the right combination and connections will come satisfaction and accomplishment. The economic problems can be handled with a positive and insightful approach, leading to a new and more appropriate lifestyle. Your numbers are 6, 15, 17, 21, 25, 32, 39

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Staying calm but standing your ground will be tough but necessary. Someone from your past will shed light on your situation, helping you find a workable solution. Extra demands may be put on you professionally. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Reassess your situation and, if you are losing ground or control of your life, adjust to a more productive lifestyle. Once you have made a decision, the changes will come easy and you'll wonder why it took you so long to fine-tune your life. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Step back, reassess and take a practical approach to what needs to be done. You can be conservative and still use your imagination. Mix a little of your Gemini pizzazz in and you can spice up something solid. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You may be caught in the middle of a heated discussion. Don't back away when it is necessary to clear the air once and for all. In the end, you will feel better. You have so much to gain by speaking up. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): There is a lesson to be learned by watching how others react. Now is the time to make a strong point about what you have to offer. Keeping things simple will work and will not break the bank. Avoid foolish mistakes. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Don't sit back when you should network and socialize all you can. This is a great day to make new contacts or touch base with someone who has shown interest in something you are working on. Show a little affection to the one you love. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Avoid any emotional conversations that may lead to unwanted change in your personal life. Someone will dump more responsibilities in your lap if you complain too much. Put more effort into improving things at home. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't get distracted by social events or fun activities when there is work to be done. Roll up your sleeves and produce. Don't allow yourself to be sidetracked by someone who is self-indulgent. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be on a rollercoaster ride if you let what others do or say influence you. Do your own thing and don't feel guilty. You have to expand your own interests and take advantage of the opportunities available to you. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Be proactive and make an important decision regarding legal, financial or medical issues. Then you will enjoy your days ahead instead of stressing over a decision. It's up to you to make a move. Don't procrastinate. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Look at your options and take your time, especially when you are in the process of getting to know someone. Show interest in what he or she does and you can make a better assessment as to whether or not you want to spend more time together. Open-mindedness will be the key. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Participate in anything you feel will bring a good return at a later date. You will learn by helping someone who is experiencing a difficult time. Make a decision regarding relationships that are dragging you down. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are practical but unique. You have a strong drive and passionate desire to reach your goals and follow your dreams. You are bright, caring and sensitive.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	2					6
6			9	3		
		7		4		
	4 5			7		
	9			8		
	7			6	3	
		4	1			
	4	9				7
8					2	

Difficulty Level ★★★★ /24

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	8	6	2	4	5	3	9	7
3	4	7	9	1	6	8	5	2
9	2	5	3	7	8	1	6	4
4	5	3	8	9	7	6	2	1
8	1	2	5	6	4	9	7	3
6	7	9	1	3	2	4	8	5
5	6	4	7	8	1	2	3	9
2	3	8	4	5	9	7	1	6
7	9	1	6	2	3	5	4	8

Difficulty Level ★★★★ /24

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

READ ONLY — Solution: 8 letters

M	H	R	E	T	U	P	M	O	C	I	T	A	T	S
D	E	E	P	S	T	H	G	I	L	E	S	A	R	E
Y	L	M	S	E	Z	I	S	C	X	I	R	I	A	M
N	P	R	O	G	R	A	M	T	M	I	O	O	K	O
A	R	O	I	R	B	O	E	P	D	A	O	L	S	U
M	E	F	B	A	Y	S	L	M	R	T	S	C	A	N
I	C	S	I	D	T	E	T	L	A	I	D	E	M	T
C	O	N	A	S	E	A	L	E	D	G	N	N	T	Y
D	R	A	C	B	S	R	D	D	N	I	A	T	E	R
E	D	R	T	K	U	E	R	O	C	D	R	A	H	A
V	E	T	S	E	F	M	C	M	B	E	B	U	R	N
I	X	V	I	L	K	A	V	O	L	T	A	G	E	I
C	I	B	A	N	K	C	O	E	R	O	I	S	I	B
Γ	Γ	Ⓢ	Ⓕ	Ⓢ	Ⓤ	T	O	N	Y	P	O	C	I	T
S	H	N	O	C	I	L	I	S	E	R	V	E	A	S

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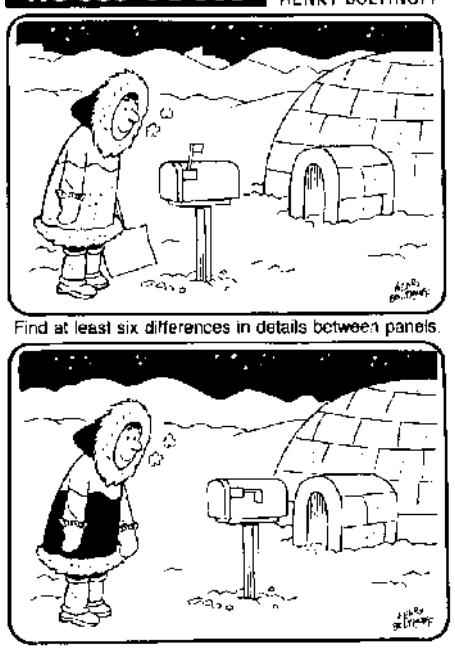
After, Bank, Base, Binary, Bios, Boot, Burn, Bytes, Camera, Card, Computer, Copy, Core, Data, Devices, Digital, Disc, Dynamic, Erase, Fixed, Flash, Fuse, Game, Hard, Help, Iconify, Light, Load, Look, Mask, Matrix, Media, Memory, Mode, Mount, Process, Program, Record, Retain, Save, Scan, Sealed, Serve, Silicon, Simple, Size, Socket, Speed, Static, Store, Tasks, Test, Transformer, Unit, Uses, Voltage

Yesterday's Answer: Estimate

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. Coat is different. 2. Shovel is missing. 3. Mailbox flag is down. 4. Mailbox has been moved. 5. Hill on horizon is missing. 6. Man's left arm is shown.

Wishing Well®

8	5	6	2	3	2	5	6	8	7	4	3	7
T	L	S	C	B	I	E	U	A	S	B	U	T
8	2	6	3	2	3	7	8	7	5	4	3	6
K	V	C	S	E	Y	A	E	Y	A	E	Γ	C
5	7	6	4	2	8	7	3	7	2	6	5	3
R	N	E	D	Y	I	E	U	U	O	S	N	T
6	5	6	3	7	2	6	4	7	4	7	5	4
S	N	U	U	T	U	P	I	R	S	A	E	C
3	4	7	2	5	4	2	6	8	5	6	5	4
R	I	L	R	W	P	A	H	N	S	E	K	L
2	8	2	4	8	4	3	6	4	2	6	5	4
P	I	P	I	T	N	E	L	E	R	D	I	D
2	8	2	5	8	5	8	5	8	2	8	2	8
O	I	V	L	A	L	T	S	I	A	V	L	E

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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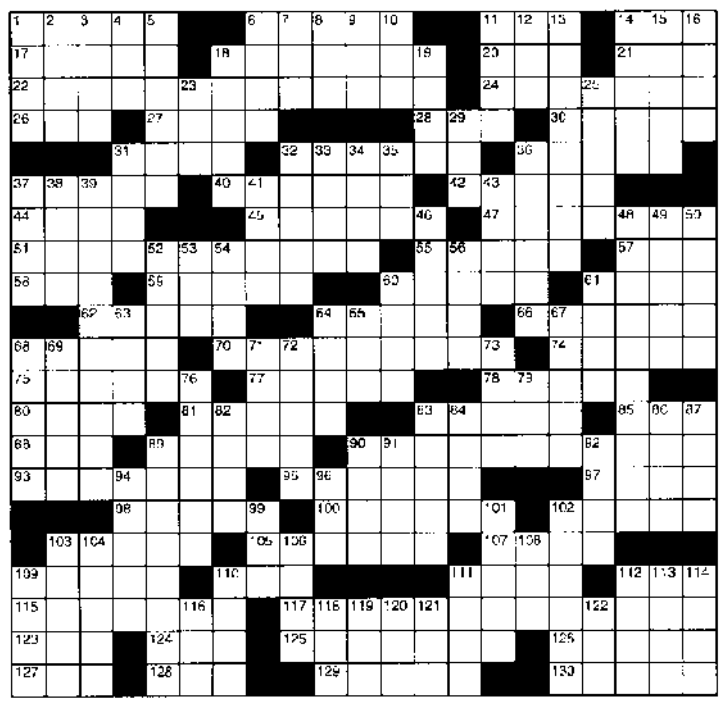
Super Crossword

RECREATION PROCLAMATION

ACROSS
1 Ladd or Lane
6 Host a roast
11 Kipling novel
14 Social worker?
17 Conductor Dorsi
18 In a perfect world
20 Slangy suffix
21 Norm
22 Start of a remark by 117 Across
24 Northwest prm capital
26 "— Day Now" (62 hit)
27 Stallion's son
28 Pom's perch
30 — laugh
31 Hound's handle
32 Torah, e.g.
36 '92 US Open champ
37 What you've gotta have
40 Acquire
42 Harden
44 — Romeo
45 Spring holiday
47 Side by side
51 Part 2 of remark
55 Lamb product
57 Vane dir.
58 — -tzu
59 Boiling
60 West African port
61 Like — of bricks
62 Austerity
64 Austen hero
66 German mark?
68 Sierra —, CA
70 All wet
74 Terra firma
75 Is useful
77 Author Potok
78 Column style
80 Claim
81 Problem for Pauline
83 Fernando or Lorenzo
85 Rocker Nugent
88 Hen of title star
89 "Odyssey" enticer
90 End of remark
93 117 Across title
95 "The — Kid" ('84 film)
97 Orthodox image
98 Pants measurement
100 Study
102 Stick one's neck out
103 Sportscaster Musberger
105 Classical hunk?
107 Shopper's delight
109 — in (tipped off)
110 Shuffleboard stick
111 TV's "— Living"
112 Hum bug?
115 More eminent
117 Speaker of remark
123 Hosp. area
124 Erwin or Gilliam
125 She handed Theseus a line
126 Break off
127 Endorses
128 Cast a spell
129 Trepidation
130 Neighbor of Oman

DOWN
1 Comic Garvey
2 Privy to
3 Part of DA
4 Uh-uh
5 Draw forth
6 Touch up the text
7 Big boys
8 Baseball's Ripken
9 Ransom — Olds
10 Brownie, for one
11 Former surgeon general
12 Unwell
13 Andy's area
14 Te's target
15 They get hit on their heads
16 Hors d'oeuvre holder
18 Northern hemisphere?
19 Scream
23 Start to snooze
25 Free-for-all
29 "The Greatest" Munich Mrs.
31 Munich Mrs.
32 Iowa, e.g.
33 "The Man in Black"
34 Formal ceremony
35 Like-minded
36 Forester or Outback
37 Rain hard?
38 Lohengrin's love
39 Priced right
41 Leonine Lahr
43 Highflying agcy.
46 Show one's feelings
48 Penguins' place
49 Newfoundland's nose
50 Fractional amount
52 Actor Bruce
53 To and —
54 Galley features
56 — -terrier
60 Pharmacy measure
61 Je —
63 Spring flower
64 Twofold
65 Paul's "Exodus" role
67 The Brainy Bunch?
68 Lady of the house
69 Spanish city
71 Farm measure
72 Use one's noodle
73 Tiny coin
76 Elan
79 Lummox
82 Desire distilled
83 Yoga position
84 Pub orders
86 North Carolina campus
87 Unit of force
89 Plymouth leader
90 Small songbird
91 Malta — —
92 Swampland
94 Like Sauternes
96 Mr. address
99 Sweater letter
101 Cosmetician Lauder
102 "Patriot Games" author
103 Thwart a blitz
104 Sewell of "A Knight's Tale"
106 — vu
108 "Do — say, not . . ."
109 Commercial award
110 Pivotal point
111 Ain't right?
112 Put on a happy face
113 In addition
114 Genesis setting
116 When the French fry
118 Significant years
119 — Tin Tin
120 "— Doll" ('64 hit)
121 Fabric arms
122 Charge



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Trivia test

by Bill Rodriguez

1. HISTORY: Where was the Battle of Anzio fought during World War II?
2. GAMES: Where will the 2010 Winter Olympics be held?
3. AD SLOGANS: What product was featured in ads that proclaimed, "Look Ma, no cavities!"
4. ENTERTAINERS: Which entertainer's catch phrase is "Can we talk?"
5. GEOLOGY: What is the origin of pumice?
6. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of Portugal?
7. MYTHOLOGY: Which character in Greek mythology slew the Minotaur?
8. MONEY: What is the basic monetary unit of Laos?
9. FOOD & DRINK: What kind of food would a charcuterie sell?
10. LITERATURE: Which one of William Shakespeare's plays has been described as "the Scottish play"?

Answers

1. Italy
2. Vancouver
3. Crest toothpaste
4. Joan Rivers
5. A porous, but solid form of lava
6. Lisbon
7. Theseus
8. The kip
9. Meat
10. "Macbeth"

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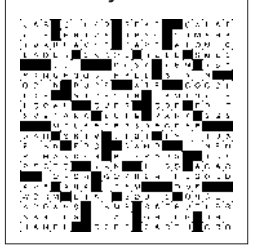
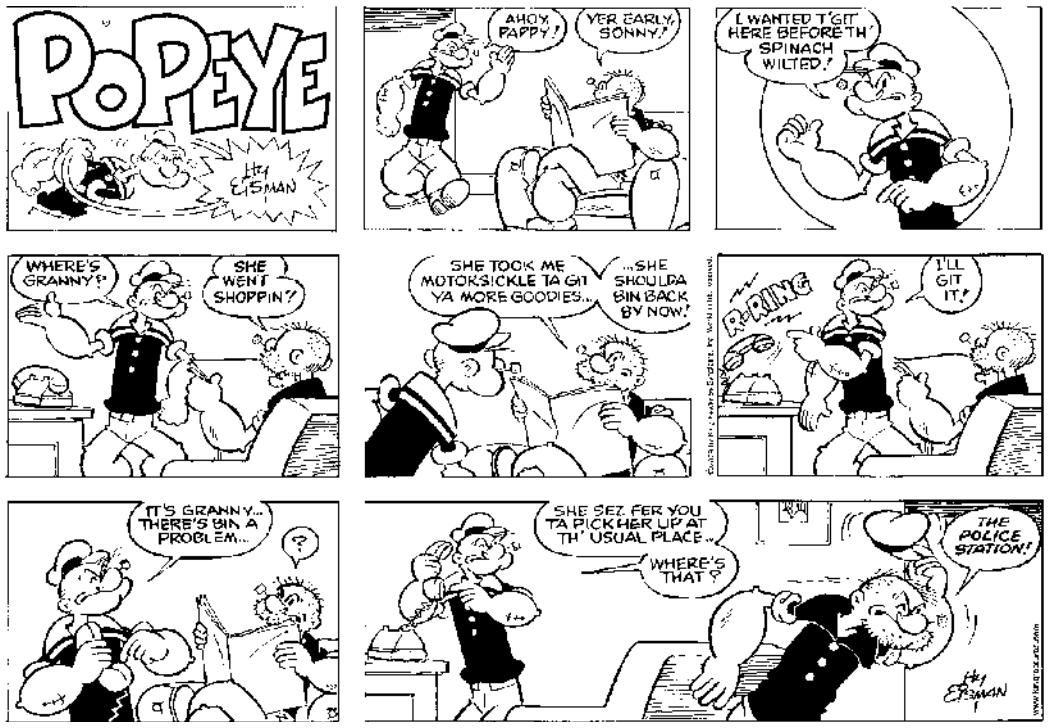
Saturday's Answers

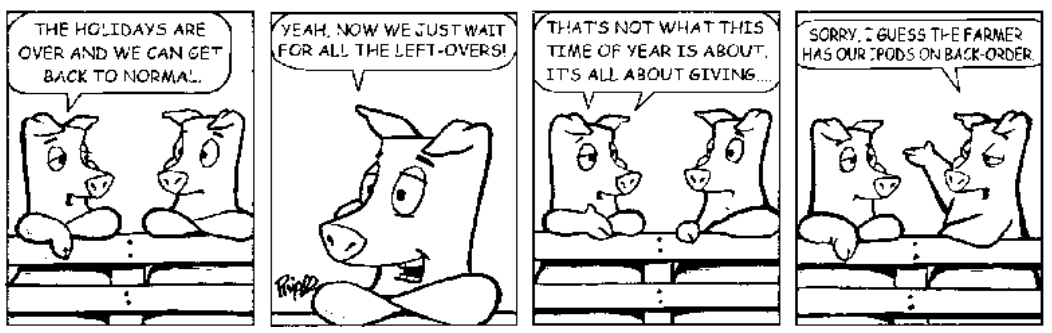


POPEYE


AHOY, PAPPY!
YER EARLY, SONNY!
I WANTED T'GIT HERE BEFORE TH' SPINACH WILTED!
WHERE'S GRANNY?
SHE WENT SHOPPIN'?
SHE TOOK ME MOTORSICKLE TA GIT YA MORE GOODIES...
...SHE SHOULDA BIN BACK BY NOW!
R-RING
I'LL GIT IT!
IT'S GRANNY... THERE'S BIN A PROBLEM...
?
SHE SEZ FER YOU TA PICK HER UP AT TH' USUAL PLACE...
WHERE'S THAT?
THE POLICE STATION!
Hy Eisman

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps


THE HOLIDAYS ARE OVER AND WE CAN GET BACK TO NORMAL.
YEAH, NOW WE JUST WAIT FOR ALL THE LEFT-OVERS!
THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS TIME OF YEAR IS ABOUT. IT'S ALL ABOUT GIVING...
SORRY, I GUESS THE FARMER HAS OUR PODS ON BACK-ORDER.

The Spats

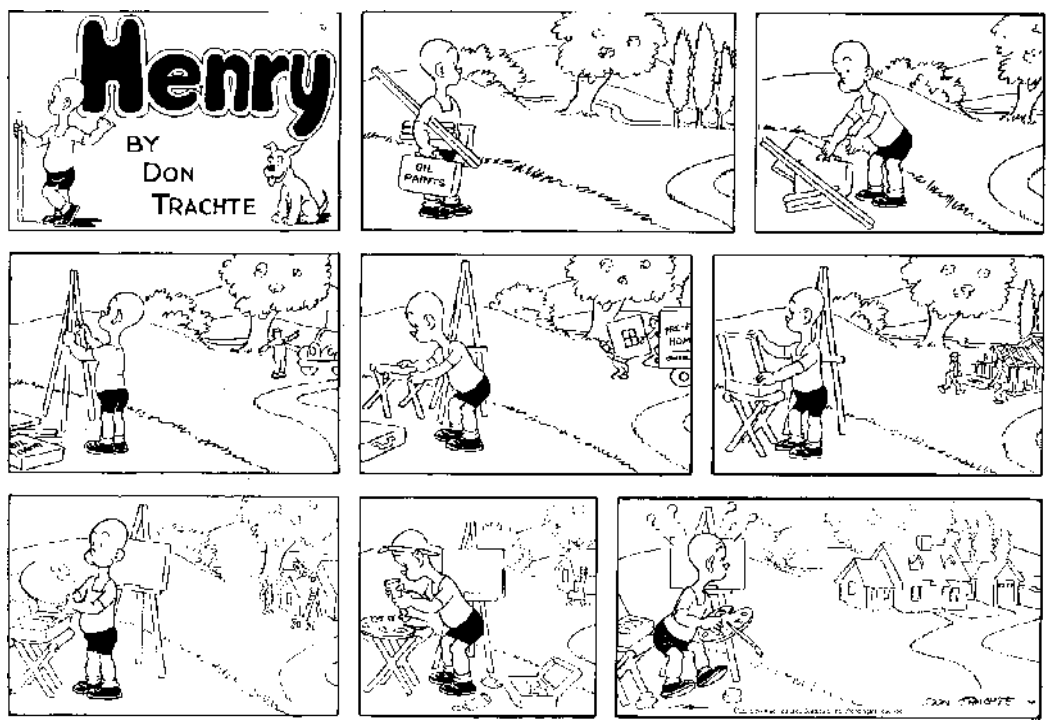
by Jeff Pickering

MARK TRAIL

THE KIT OR SWIFT FOX IS ONE OF THE SMALLEST FOXES IN THE WORLD—IT IS BARELY LARGER THAN A HOUSE CAT
THE LITTLE DESERT FOX IS SO FAST IT CAN OUTRUN MOST ENEMIES
THE SWIFT OR KIT FOX WAS ONCE COMMON IN THE WESTERN STATES, BUT IT IS NOW ENDANGERED IN 90 PERCENT OF ITS ORIGINAL HABITAT
TRAPPING, POISONING AND HABITAT DESTRUCTION ARE THE PRIMARY CAUSES FOR THEIR LOW NUMBERS...
COYOTES, WHICH ARE MUCH LARGER, ARE ALSO TAKING OVER THE RANGE OF THE SMALL CANINE
THE SMALL BUT BIG-EARED FOX SELDOM RELIES ON ITS NOSE WHEN SEARCHING FOR FOOD...
AS ITS KEEN SENSE OF HEARING IS MORE RELIABLE...
AND IT CAN USUALLY TELL WHETHER ITS PREY IS NEARBY OR WHETHER IT IS AN ENEMY THAT IT MUST OUTRUN

Henry

BY DON TRACHTE



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• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Heat's Mourning announces retirement

MIAMI (AP)—Alonzo Mourning has decided to retire rather than mount another NBA comeback at age 38. The seven-time All-Star center said Thursday he won't return from a devastating leg injury in 2007. He's not under contract but had been working out at the Miami Heat's complex and still had a spot in the team's locker room.

Mourning hasn't played since tearing the patella tendon and quadriceps muscle in his right leg on Dec. 19, 2007, the fourth anniversary of his lifesaving kidney transplant. He said he feared another return would put his health in jeopardy.

"I truly feel it's best that I retire," Mourning said at a news conference. "When you've got something you love and you're passionate about, it's hard to let that go. But at 38 I feel I've physically done all I can for this game. It has been an amazing ride."

Mourning, who turns 39 next month, played at Georgetown and was the second overall pick in the 1992 draft by the Charlotte Hornets. He also played for New Jersey but spent the majority of his career with the Heat, helping them reach the playoffs six consecutive years. He was the backup center to Shaquille O'Neal when Miami won the NBA title in 2006.

At age 30, Mourning was diagnosed in October 2000 with focal segmental glomerulosclerosis, a career-threatening kidney disease. He missed most of the ensuing season but rejoined the Heat in March 2001 and made the All-Star team the following year.

When his condition worsened, he missed the entire 2002-03 season and underwent a transplant in 2003. Again he returned, but for three consecutive summers beginning in 2005, Mourning considered retirement before choosing to keep playing.

"It's not a sad day, but it's a day to celebrate," Mourning said. "I can think of a million people right now that would have loved to walk the path I've walked. The ups and the downs made it even more joyous."

In 15 seasons, Mourning averaged 17.1 points and 8.5 rebounds and twice was chosen NBA defensive player of the year. He averaged 6.0 points and 3.7 rebounds in 25 games last season for the Heat.

Mourning has long supported charitable causes in Miami and campaigned for better education. He attended President Barack Obama's inauguration on Tuesday.

Alonzo Mourning announces his retirement from professional basketball during a news conference in Miami Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009.

AP

Grizzlies fire coach Iavaroni after 11-30 start

NEW YORK (AP)—Halfway through another lost season, the Memphis Grizzlies fired coach Marc Iavaroni on Thursday night.

Team spokesman Dustin Krugel confirmed Iavaroni's dismissal, but would not say who would coach the Grizzlies on Friday night against the Knicks. General manager Chris Wallace was traveling to New York.

Memphis has lost seven straight and 15 of 17 to fall to 11-30 after Iavaroni led the team to a 22-60 record last season, his first as an NBA head coach.

Iavaroni's firing was first reported by TNT and The Commercial Appeal.

According to a story on the newspaper's Web site, assistant Johnny Davis will coach Memphis for the next two games before Lionel Hollins rejoins the team for a third stint as head coach. Hollins is an assistant with Milwaukee. The report cited a source with knowledge of the organization's plans.

The Grizzlies went 49-33 and made the playoffs in 2005-06, but Mike Fratello was fired after the team got off to a 6-24 start the following season. Tony Barone Sr. took over on an interim basis and led Memphis to an NBA-worst 22-60 mark.

The Grizzlies were in a prime spot to nab Greg Oden or Kevin Durant in the 2007 draft, but slipped to the fourth spot in the lottery and ended up with guard Mike Conley - so far a disappointment.

Then-Memphis president Jerry West called the lottery result "grossly unfair."

Iavaroni became the ninth coach in franchise history in May 2007 after spending five seasons as an assistant with Phoenix. He also coached under Pat Riley in Miami from 1999-02 and Fratello in Cleveland from 1997-99. Iavaroni played in the NBA from 1982-89 with Philadelphia, San Antonio and Utah.

The Grizzlies are the seventh team to fire a coach this season, following Washington, Toronto, Sacramento, Philadelphia, Oklahoma City and Minnesota.

O.J. Mayo, the No. 3 overall pick in last year's draft, and Rudy Gay both have been bright spots for Memphis, but the team was 29th in the league in scoring at 93 points per game.

The Grizzlies made the playoffs for three straight seasons from 2003-06, but were swept in the first round each time.

Magic held to season low as Celtics win 7th straight

ORLANDO, Florida (AP)—The Boston Celtics knocked the Orlando Magic from the top perch in the overall NBA standings with a 90-80 win on Thursday, leaving Magic coach Stan Van Gundy to blame himself.

"I'm pretty big on holding players accountable," Van Gundy said. "On this one, it's me. I've got to find a way for us to get some ball movement and freedom of movement where we can get some shots. So I'm frustrated in myself."

It's a common reaction among coaches after recent games against the defending champion Celtics, who moved level with Cleveland on win percentage atop the Eastern Conference, and just behind the Los Angeles Lakers in the West.

Boston's Paul Pierce had 27 points and 10 rebounds, Glen Davis added a season-high 16 points and Boston disrupted everything Orlando wanted offensively, holding the Magic to a season-low in points.

Orlando's Dwight Howard, who on Thursday became the first player in league history to receive 3 million votes in a season for the All-Star game, was held to a relatively ordinary 11 points and 11 rebounds. He fouled out with 2:30 left, and Orlando's run of seven straight wins was snapped.

Lakers 117, Wizards 97

In Los Angeles, the home team maintained its outright lead in the league percentage standings with a comfortable win over struggling Washington.

Andrew Bynum had 23 points and 14 rebounds and Pau Gasol added 18 points for the Lakers.

On the third anniversary of his franchise-record 81-point game, Kobe Bryant had 11 points, five assists and four rebounds in 28 minutes for Los Angeles.

Earlier in the day, Bryant was selected to start in the All-Star game for the 11th consecutive season.

Los Angeles' 34-8 start is their best since 1971-72, and coach Phil Jackson had the luxury of resting many of his starters over the course of successive games against lowly Washington and the L.A. Clippers.

NBA BRIEFS

Ellis plans Friday return to Warriors

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Monta Ellis will be in the Golden State Warriors' lineup for the first time this season Friday night when they host the Cleveland Cavaliers. The Warriors (13-30) decided after Thursday's practice to welcome back Ellis, who has missed the entire season while recovering from a sprained ankle sustained in an accident on a motorized scooter last summer. Ellis has been back at practice for several weeks with the Warriors, who suspended him for 30 games without pay after the incident. The high-scoring guard got a six-year, $66 million contract extension about one month before crashing his scooter.

Magic Howard sets NBA All-Star voting record

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—He was the first to dress as Superman to win a dunk contest. He's now the first player to get 3 million votes from fans. Yes, the All-Star game is fast becoming Dwight Howard's personal showcase. The Orlando Magic center—who leads the NBA in rebounds, blocked shots and double-doubles—got a record 3,150,181 votes to lead this season's All-Star team, released Thursday. The Feb. 15 game in Phoenix will mark the third All-Star trip for Howard, who'll be starting for the second time and easily topped the previous record of 2,558,278 votes collected by Houston's Yao Ming four years ago. "Wow, what a blessing," said Howard, the 6-foot-11 center who dressed in full Superman regalia, cape and all, on the way to winning last year's slam dunk competition. "That is what I took it as, a blessing from God and then the fans. It's just a great honor and I was surprised, but like always I thank the fans for everything they have done for us." The final results of fan balloting didn't exactly bring any major surprises. Miami's Dwyane Wade (2,741,413) and Detroit's Allen Iverson (1,804,649) will be in the East's backcourt, alongside reigning All-Star MVP LeBron James of Cleveland (2,940,823) and Boston's Kevin Garnett (2,066,833), who beat New Jersey's Yi Jianlian for the starting nod by 253,004 votes. Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers (2,805,397) was the West's top vote-getter, and will be joined at guard by New Orleans' Chris Paul (2,134,798). At center, Yao (2,532,958) will start for the sixth time, along with forwards Tim Duncan of San Antonio (2,578,168) and Amare Stoudemire of Phoenix (1,460,429).

Artest, McGrady close to returning from injuries

HOUSTON (AP)—Ron Artest and Tracy McGrady practiced with the Houston Rockets on Thursday and said they were close to recovering from injuries that have nagged them most of the season. The Rockets open a three-game road trip at Indiana on Friday night, but neither Artest nor McGrady can say when they'll return to the lineup. The team's medical staff and coach Rick Adelman have input in the final decision, both players said. McGrady has missed 15 games this season with soreness in his left knee, the aftermath of offseason surgery. He sat out the second game of Houston's past four back-to-back sets and hasn't played since Jan. 9. McGrady said he'll miss Friday's game and won't play in the All-Star Game if he's voted onto the West roster. "I felt pretty good today after practice; I'll try to get another one in on Saturday and we'll see where it goes," McGrady said. "I'm not ready to play in a regular game with my team, so All-Star night, thinking about that, it's not even a question."

Djokovic beats Delic before violence flares

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Defending champion Novak Djokovic survived a spirited encounter with Bosnian-born American Amer Delic in the Australian Open on Friday before crowd trouble flared outside.

The 21-year-old Serb lost a set for the first time in the tournament and had to fend off two set points in the fourth before beating Delic 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (4).

Moments after Djokovic and Delic embraced at the net, smiled and waved to all parts of the crowd in Rod Laver Arena, screams, water bottles and plastic chairs were hurled back and forth between the Bosnian and Serb fans who had been watching the match live on a big TV screen next to the arena.

One Bosnian girl was hit in the head and stumbled from the area on the arms of friends as police and security staff rushed to separate the rivals. The loud, angry scuffle was over within two minutes, and police took many of the participants to another area for questioning.

"They started it. They threw the first chair and knocked our girl down and kept throwing things at her," one Bosnian man said before he was taken away a police officer. Victoria state police and organizers had no immediate comment.

There was no animosity on court.

"Of course, I have a big respect for Amer," Djokovic said, to loud cheers from the crowd. "He absolutely deserves your applause and even more.

"He has one of the biggest serves on tour. It was very difficult for me to read."

No. 127-ranked Delic got into the draw as a lucky loser from qualifying when Nicolas Kiefer withdrew with an injured ankle. He rallied to win two five-set matches to make the first round, his best run at a major.

AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns to Amer Delic of the United States during their Men's singles match at the Australian Open Tennis Championship in Melbourne, Australia, Friday, Jan. 23, 2009.

In the tiebreaker, Djokovic challenged a call and stopped a rally, risking losing the point if he was wrong.

He wasn't, forcing a replay and winning the point when Delic double-faulted.

"I might have looked confident, but I was not. It was very lucky," said Djokovic, who beat Roger Federer in the semifinals here last year and claimed his first major. "Sometimes you need luck."

Djokovic will play the winner of Friday's later match between American Mardy Fish and 2006 runner-up Marcos Baghdatis.

No. 8 Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina beat Gilles Muller of Luxembourg 6-7 (5), 7-5, 6-3, 7-5, remaining the only Argentine man still in the draw of the nine who started the tournament.

The 20-year-old del Potro won the Auckland title coming into Melbourne and is on a seven-match winning streak.

No. 19 Marin Cilic of Croatia had an upset 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-4 win over No. 11 David Ferrer of Spain.

On the women's side, Olympic silver medalist Dinara Safina reached the fourth round for the first time in seven trips to the Australian Open with a 6-2, 6-2 win over No. 25 Kaia Kanepi of Estonia.

"There's a first time for everything. Twice I lost in the third round," the 22-year-old Russian said. "I was like this today: 'That is the third time. Should be the luckiest one.'"

The third-seeded Safina broke into the top 10 last year for the first time and credits having a full-time coach and trainer for the rise.

She is yet to win a Grand Slam singles title, although she reached the French Open final last year before losing to Ana Ivanovic of Serbia.

Fellow Russians Vera Zvonareva and Nadia Petrova are also in the fourth round.

No. 7 Zvonareva beat Italy's Sara Errani 6-4, 6-1 and No. 10 Petrova advanced when Kazakhstan's Galina Voskoboeva retired with back pain after losing the first set 6-1.

Safina planned to rest and return to Rod Laver Arena later Friday to watch older brother, Marat Safin, play second-ranked Federer.

"Well, I hope on center court with winning, I hope he can close the same way I win today," she said.

Safin, who beat Federer in the semifinals before winning the 2005 Australian title, looms as an obstacle to Federer's quest to equal Pete Sampras' 14 Grand Slam singles titles.

Security was tight across Melbourne Park for the Djokovic-Delic match. In 2007, police ejected more than 150 fans one day from the same area after hostilities escalated between ethnic groups.

Complaints about the cheering before and during points followed both Delic's previous wins over Taylor Dent and No. 28 Paul-Henri Mathieu.

He appealed to his fans for calm in a message on his Web site. Organizers took the precaution of putting the match on the all-ticket stadium.

Extra security staff were deployed to nearly packed stadium and kept a close eye on pockets of the most vocal fans.

There were significantly more Serbian supporters, but Delic had his share of backers, too.

The two sides, some in the colors of their national soccer teams, did swap occasional shouted taunts. But they mostly seemed to be cheering for their favorites, and the players clearly fed off their energy.

When Delic broke for a 3-2 edge that was the key to taking the second set, he turned his hand toward his forehead, then pointed to his fans.

Djokovic pumped his fist and looked toward his most vocal supporters after getting the only break of the third set, when Delic whacked back-to-back double-faults to set up breakpoint.

Otherwise, it was all business on court, punctuated by shows of good sportsmanship. Several times, Djokovic applauded with his racket after great shots by Delic and gave him the thumbs-up when the American correctly challenged a line call in the tiebreaker.

In the biggest upset so far at the season's first major, sixth-seeded Venus Williams lost 2-6, 6-3, 7-5 on Thursday night in the second round to Carla Suarez Navarro, a 20-year-old Spaniard ranked No. 46.

Williams was broken while serving for the match and dropped the last five games.

It means there will be no Williams vs. Williams showdown in the semifinals. Second-seeded Serena Williams advanced 6-3, 7-5 over Argentina's Gisela Dulko.

Perez holds lead after record-setting 36 holes

LA QUINTA, Calif. (AP)—Pat Perez shot a 9-under 63 on Thursday to become the first player in PGA Tour history to play a 36-hole stretch in a tournament in 20 under, keeping him two strokes in front in the Bob Hope Classic.

After opening with a 61, Perez had nine birdies during a bogey-free second round and was at 124 through the first two days of the 90-hole tournament. Along with setting a PGA Tour low against par for consecutive rounds, his 36-hole total was the lowest ever to begin a tournament.

Mark Calcavecchia was at 124 through two rounds of the 2001 Phoenix Open, but that was on a par-71 course. Perez had his opening 61 at the Palmer Course at PGA West, and followed it with the 63 on the Nicklaus Course at PGA West.

On another mild, still day in the desert, Perez's sizzling scoring still wasn't enough to give him a pad—six players were within four shots. Briny Baird aced the par-3, 140-yard seventh at the Nicklaus Course with a 9-iron on the way to his second 63 and an 18-under 126 total.

David Berganio Jr. had a 64 and was another shot behind. Tom Pernice Jr. (63) Chris Stroud (63), Richard Johnson (65) and Jason Dufner (65) were 16 under.

The 32-year-old Perez, still chasing his first tour win, followed his sparkling opening round with another day of well-placed drives, pinpoint iron play and deadly accurate putting. He rolled in a 15-footer on No. 7, a 40-footer from the fringe on No. 11, a 20-footer on No. 14, and other birdie putts from 10 feet and in.

For the second straight day, he putted only 25 times.

"I've played two unbelievable rounds and I'm very happy where I'm at," said Perez, enjoying the moment but fully realizing that two rounds won't get the job done in the 90-hole Hope.

Asked about setting a standard, Perez said, "It means you can get hot for two days. I would like to have all kinds of records at the end of the week - three-day, four-day, five-day, trophy, Vegas, booze, all that stuff. That's what I want."

The tour records for three, four and five rounds certainly don't seem out of reach if the wind doesn't kick up over the next three days. The record for 54 holes is 189, a mark shared by a group including Calcavecchia. Tommy Armour III set the 72-hole mark of 254 in the 2003 Texas Open, and the 90-hole record is Joe Durant's 36-under 324 at the 2001 Hope.

Even if Perez falters, some of the players trailing him may have a shot at records.

"The course is set up for it, the pin placements aren't the hardest, and the weather's been perfect," Perez said. "Everything has to factor in when everybody's shooting low scores. It's not a mystery."

Said Baird: "Yeah, it's the conditions. There's the wind; when the wind howled today, it howled two miles an hour. The greens aren't very firm, yet they are. If you're hitting a wedge, you're sucking them back. It's as easy as you could ask for."

He still was a bit awed by the numbers, especially Perez's.

"I don't care how easy the conditions are or how easy they can set up a golf course, that's a heck of a lot of birdies and you're doing a heck of a lot of things right," Baird said.

Four players went 19 under in consecutive rounds in the past, with Tim Herron the most recent, in the 2003 Hope. Five players were at 125 for the first two days, with Tiger Woods the first, in the 2000 WGC-NEC Invitational, and Carl Pettersson the most recent, in the 2008 Wyndham Championship.

Report: McGwire accused by brother of steroid use

NEW YORK (AP)—Mark McGwire's youngest brother says in a book proposal that he injected the former baseball star with steroids, according to Deadspin.com. Jay McGwire is circulating a manuscript titled "The McGwire Family Secret: The Truth about Steroids, a slugger and Ultimate Redemption," the Web site reported Wednesday. Jay McGwire, a body builder, said his brother started using steroids in 1994 and that he injected Mark with Deca-Durabolin.

"Mark is a man I think most would like to forgive because his reason wasn't nefarious—it was for survival," the proposal says, according to the Web site. "My bringing the truth to surface about Mark is out of love. I want Mark to live in truth to see the light, to come to repentance so he can live in freedom—which is the only way to live."

Jay McGwire, who says he has a strained relationship with his brother, could not be reached for comment Thursday. Telephone numbers for his home and fitness center in California were disconnected.

Mark McGwire repeatedly has denied using illegal performance-enhancing drugs. When he testified under oath before Congress in 2005, however, he wouldn't discuss whether he did.

"Who knows what might have happened if I didn't get Mark involved with all the training, supplements, the right foods, steroids, and HGH?" the Web site quoted Jay McGwire as writing. "He would not have broken any records, and the congressional hearings would have gone on without him. Maybe Barry Bonds wouldn't have ever gotten involved with the stuff, either."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	36	9	.800	_
Philadelphia	20	21	.488	14
New Jersey	19	23	.452	15 1/2
New York	17	24	.415	17
Toronto	16	28	.364	19 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	9	.786	_
Atlanta	25	16	.610	7 1/2
Miami	22	19	.537	10 1/2
Charlotte	17	25	.405	16
Washington	9	33	.214	24

Central Division

Cleveland	32	8	.800	_
Detroit	24	17	.585	8 1/2
Milwaukee	21	24	.467	13 1/2
Chicago	18	25	.419	15 1/2
Indiana	15	27	.357	18

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	28	13	.683	_
New Orleans	26	13	.667	1
Houston	27	16	.628	2
Dallas	24	18	.571	4 1/2
Memphis	11	30	.268	17

Northwest Division

Denver	28	15	.651	_
Portland	25	17	.595	2 1/2
Utah	25	18	.581	3
Minnesota	13	27	.325	13 1/2
Oklahoma City	9	34	.209	19

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	34	8	.810	_
Phoenix	23	17	.575	10
Golden State	13	30	.302	21 1/2
Sacramento	10	33	.233	24 1/2
L.A. Clippers	9	32	.220	24 1/2

Yesterday's Games
Boston 90, Orlando 80
L.A. Lakers 117, Washington 97

BOB HOPE CHRYSLER CLASSIC SCORES

LA QUINTA, California (AP)–Scores Thursday from the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic, a $5.1 million U.S. PGA Tour event at four par-72 courses; 6,930-yard PGA West (Palmer course), 6,924-yard PGA West (Nicklaus course), 7,017-yard Bermuda Dunes CC, 7,403-yard Silver Rock:

SECOND ROUND

Pat Perez	61-63	124
Briny Baird	63-63	126
David Berganio, Jr.	63-64	127
Richard S. Johnson	63-65	128
Jason Dufner	63-65	128
Tom Pernice, Jr.	65-63	128
Chris Stroud	65-63	128
Brad Adamonis	67-62	129
Steve Elkington	65-64	129
Derek Fathauer	65-64	129
Chris Couch	67-63	130
Vaughn Taylor	63-67	130
Cliff Kresge	68-63	131
Bo Van Pelt	66-65	131
Bubba Watson	62-69	131
Rich Beem	66-65	131
Kevin Sutherland	64-67	131
David Mathis	66-66	132
Scott Piercy	66-66	132
Ryuji Imada	67-65	132
Peter Lonard	65-67	132
Chris DiMarco	64-68	132
Steve Stricker	65-67	132
Mark Wilson	66-66	132
Mike Weir	62-70	132
Chez Reavie	66-66	132
D.J. Trahan	65-67	132
Heath Slocum	65-67	132
Steve Lowery	67-65	132
Robert Garrigus	67-65	132
John Merrick	68-65	133
John Mallinger	66-67	133
Lucas Glover	65-68	133
Glen Day	65-68	133
Jeff Maggert	66-67	133
Ben Crane	63-70	133
Matt Kuchar	66-67	133
David Toms	68-65	133
Webb Simpson	68-66	134
Jeff Klauk	67-67	134
Scott McCarron	66-68	134
Nathan Green	69-65	134
Stephen Ames	71-63	134
Rick Price	64-70	134
Woody Austin	66-68	134
Olin Browne	66-68	134
Steve Marino	65-69	134
Michael Letzig	66-68	134
Alex Cejka	68-67	135
Cameron Beckman	68-67	135
Ryan Palmer	70-65	135
Charlie Wi	68-67	135
Martin Laird	67-68	135
Bob Estes	66-69	135
Billy Mayfair	68-67	135
Tim Clark	66-69	135
Steve Flesch	68-67	135
Bill Lunde	67-68	135
Casey Wittenberg	69-66	135
Brian Gay	65-70	135
Mark Brooks	69-66	135
Nicholas Thompson	66-70	136
Todd Hamilton	65-71	136
Will MacKenzie	70-66	136
Brett Quigley	68-68	136
Kirk Triplett	67-69	136
Mathew Goggin	66-70	136
Jason Bohn	66-70	136
Bill Haas	68-68	136
Ken Duke	68-68	136
David Duval	68-68	136
Jerry Kelly	66-71	137
Johnson Wagner	70-67	137
Nick Watney	66-71	137
Jeff Quinney	71-66	137
Chad Campbell	66-71	137
John Senden	67-70	137
Tim Petrovic	68-69	137
Bobby Clampett	70-67	137
Tim Wilkinson	65-72	137
Colt Knost	69-68	137
Brendon de Jonge	67-70	137
Eric Axley	69-68	137
D.A. Points	71-66	137
Brian Bateman	68-70	138
Dean Wilson	67-71	138
Mark Calcavecchia	68-70	138
Charley Hoffman	72-66	138
Greg Owen	69-69	138
Jason Gore	70-68	138
Joe Durant	73-66	139
Michael Allen	68-71	139
Dustin Johnson	68-71	139
John Huston	69-70	139
Kevin Na	70-69	139
Corey Pavin	71-68	139
Billy Andrade	68-71	139
Justin Leonard	72-67	139
Matthew Borchert	69-71	140
Jonathan Byrd	70-70	140
Greg Chalmers	69-71	140
Robert Gamez	70-70	140
Scott Verplank	69-71	140
Fred Couples	68-72	140
Daniel Chopra	72-69	141
Notah Begay III	69-72	141
Bart Bryant	70-71	141
Tommy Armour III	70-71	141
James Nitties	73-68	141
Jarrod Lyle	71-71	142
Gary Woodland	72-70	142
Matt Bettencourt	65-77	142
Mike Miles	70-72	142
Harrison Frazar	72-70	142
Donnie Hammond	72-71	143
Wes Short, Jr.	72-71	143
Peter Tomasulo	73-70	143
Troy Kelly	73-70	143
Tim Herron	71-72	143
Joe Ogilvie	70-73	143
John Rollins	71-73	144
James Oh	71-73	144
Brian Davis	72-72	144
Jesper Parnevik	72-73	145
Ryan Moore	68-77	145
Lee Janzen	74-71	145
Kris Blanks	70-78	148
Brad Faxon	77-72	149

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Men's Division

DCCA	10	0
CPA	10	1
Freedom Air	8	1
No Zone	8	2
Legislature	8	4
Joeten Motors	7	3
Beach Boys	6	2
Docomo	6	4
DLNR	5	5
DEQ/CRM	5	5
POI	4	4
P & S	4	4
Law & Order	3	6
PSS	3	6
CUC	3	7
CHC	2	7
PIC	2	7
Customs	2	9
Mayors	1	11
Hopwood	0	9

Women's Division

NMC	7	1
DCCA	3	3
Finance	3	4
CUC	3	4
CHC	1	5

Hamoy, Cabo rule 8-Ball tournaments

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Chester Hamoy and Marvin Cabo topped separate 8-ball tournaments held at Round Two Bar and Grill last week.

Hamoy prevailed in the Thursday Night 8-Ball Open Tournament besting 13 other cue artists, while Cabo ruled the 8-Ball Open Tournament defeating 10 other participants.

Cabo overcame Senen Pangelinan's twice-to-beat advantage to win the double-elimination tournament and pocket the $75 prize and a trophy.

Cabo downed Patrick Taitano in his first game, defeated Juancho Mendoza next, and then Boyet Soriano to advance to the semifinals.

In the semis of the winners' bracket, Cabo was paired with the unbeaten Pangelinan, who won over Franz De Luna, Hamoy, and Eric Santos.

Pangelinan marched to the finals with a twice-to-beat advantage after thumping Cabo, who dropped to the losers' bracket.

In the losers' bracket, Cabo faced Soriano and won to earn a rematch with Pangelinan in the finals.

Soriano, who prevailed against Gary Pangelinan in his first match and had a chance to challenge Cabo for the last finals berth after beating Santos, settled for third place.

Hamoy was the first finalist in the Thursday Night tournament after sweeping his first four matches. His first victim was Taylor Watanabe, followed by Mel Usi, Soriano, and Mendoza.

Hamoy's foe in the finals was Soriano, who needed to win twice to steal the victory. Soriano came from the losers' bracket and had to down two more opponents to make it to the finals. He thwarted Usi in the losers' bracket quarterfinals and moved into the title match after outlasting Mendoza in the semifinals.

Hamoy won in Game 1 of the finals to wrap up the duel and take home the $75 prize. Soriano settled for $45, while Mendoza pocketed $20.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Chester Hamoy, seen here eyeing his target during the a Christmas tournament last year, topped last weekend's Thursday Nigh 8-Ball Open Tournament at Round Two Bar.

MMA

From Page 28

to win this one," said Ware, who idolizes UFC's Quintin Jackson.

Four other match-ups between fighters from Saipan and Guam will spice-up up the event.

Saipan's Fiden Teregeyo will test the mettle of Guam's Ray Apiag in the 145 lbs. category. Both players will have their baptism of fire in the octagon cage.

Joe 'Bad Manners' Aldan of Saipan will then meet Peter Boy Alvarez of Guam in a battle of first-timers.

Saipan's Reagan Mality is hoping to score his first win after two unsuccessful attempts against a neophyte from Guam, Robert A. Baza.

One of Saipan's veterans, Derek "Pinchi" Rangamar will take on Guam's Tony "The Wreck" Reyes in the 140-lb. bout.

Rangamar has a 3-3 record while Reyes is undefeated in his two previous fights.

The other match-ups are Jacob Ilo Zalaka vs. Jerome Fujihira of Trench Tech; Jordan Ogo of Team Haga vs. Eddie Paulis of Pwang; Stanley Ogo vs. Mark "The Dark" Nuque of Trench Tech; Daniel Ogo of Team Haga vs. Kevin Esteves of Marianas Elite; independent fighter Dino Mettao vs. Seung Min Lee of Trench Tech; E.J. Palacios of DAT Gym vs. Tom "Lites Out" Kim of Trench Tech; Francisco Palacios vs. Martin Ayuyu of Marianas Elite; Rick "Too Slick" San Nicolas of SSS vs. Stanley Tuwun of Team Yap; and Kyle Peterson of Trench Tech USA vs. George Cruz.

TEAMMATES

From Page 28

ball are nominated for the prestigious award, along with tracksters Jackie Wonenberg and Lia Rangamar, and Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan's Marystar Welch and Angel Marie Tan.

Completing the list are tennis' Thea Minor and basketball's Roxanne Duenas.

Martinsen was the first recipient of the NMASA Female Student Athlete of the Month award claiming the honor in February.

The 10-year-old Saipan Community School student earned the monthly plum after getting the highest point in her age group in the 3rd Annual SSC Heptathlon Virtual Meet and winning in the 1,000m of the Annual Meek and Mighty Ocean Swim.

After the SSC tournaments, Martinsen went to Australia and set six lifetime best swims in the Far North Queensland Championships.

Kimball was not part of the SSC team that competed Down Under, but she was on the SSC roster that joined the 2008 Guam Championships in May.

In Guam, she took seven silver medals and a bronze, and made seven LTBs thus earning the Female Student Athlete of the Month for May.

Welch is nominated after securing the monthly plum for March. The Marianas High School student was the High Point awardee during the SSC International Meet.

Eight months later, it was Tan's turn to notch a monthly award. Tan, also of Tsunami Saipan, was named Female Student Athlete of the Month for November after setting personal best times in five events she joined in during the SSC All Schools Meet.

The multi-sport athlete Rangamar shattered CNMI age group records in the 200m run and javelin and discuss throws during the CNMI All School Meet en route to winning the April title.

Rangamar earned her second monthly award in October. This time, she was recognized for her efforts on the basketball court. She was the top scorer for the CNMI Junior National Women's Team that competed in the 2008 Oceania Youth Tournament in Guam. Rangamar's biggest game was against Palau when she tallied 31 points and 13 rebounds.

Wonenberg gave the CNMI its first gold medal in pentathlon competition at the Oceania Championships last June. The MHS student also won a silver medal in the 4x100m relay and bronze in the long and triple jump events on top of setting a CNMI mark in the 100m hurdles.

Minor went to two off-island tournaments, left impressive marks in Fiji and New Caledonia, and was awarded with the Female Student Athlete of the Month for September when she returned to Saipan.

Minor was a third placer in the 2008 Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji, and a semifinalist in a provincial championship in the French colony.

Basketball's second nominee and the last to take a monthly award (December) is Duenas.

Duenas is only 13 years old, but her basketball skills are far ahead than players in her age group. The Hopwood Junior High School student decided to play in the 18-and-under division of the Holiday Hoops and still stood out the best in the group of taller and more experienced players, earning the MVP honors in the tournament.

NMASA members will make the selection for the outstanding female student of 2008 next month.

CPA

From Page 28

But Mayor's Office never scored from then on with its string of fielding errors.

Fred Robert led the Mayor's Office with two runs, one hit, and an RBI.

Five of his teammates were able to record one run each, including Donald Manalo in the first, pitcher John Guererro in the second, Joe Tudela, John Maratita, and Ernest Kani in the third but that did not help their team stop its slide.

Mayor's Office is now in 19th place in the 20-team field with a 1-11 card.

In the first game of the night, Legislature also improved its record to 8-4 by blanking Customs, 4-0.

First baseman Fonz Tarope scored runs in the first and fourth to lead Legislature's batters, while second baseman Dennis Neskabei had one in the first and outfielder Ben Camacho in the seventh.

The loss was Customs' ninth in 11 outings and the team is groping for form in the bottom of the team standings at 18th place.

Djokovic beats Delic before violence flares

Defending champion Novak Djokovic survived a spirited encounter with Bosnian-born American Amer Delic in the Australian Open on Friday before crowd trouble flared outside. 26

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Mourning announces retirement

Alonzo Mourning has decided to retire rather than mount another NBA comeback at age 38. 25

Teammates nominated for female student plum

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

ATHLETES of the YEAR

The battle for the 2008 Female Student Athlete of Year will be among teammates.

Saipan Swim Club bets Abigail Martinsen and Grace Kim-

See TEAMMATES on Page 27

Martinsen

Kimball

Wonenberg

Rangamar

Welch

Tan

Minor

Duenas

GCA opens COPSSA caging with win

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Grace Christian Academy clawed its way to victory at Mt. Carmel School's home court Thursday to open its title campaign in the 2009 Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association basketball league on a bright note.

The visiting Lady Eagles shrugged off the Knights' wild cheering crowd, as the former completely dominated the game and went on to post a 32-12 win.

The two teams traded occasional shots in the first half of play, which ended with a 12-8 Eagles' lead.

Janela Revilla made a couple of two pointers for the Eagles, while Kaylani Lebria and Carey Demapan scored each from underneath for the Knights to make it 16-12.

Then it was an all Eagles' show after those exchanges, as the Lady Eagles broke loose with a 16-0 run to wrap-up the morale-boosting win.

Kallie O'Connor scored six points in that amazing run and finished the game with eight points, same total of Chezka De Luna.

Other scores for the Eagles were Kristine Molina and Revilla with six points each, while Crystalline Cristobal and Angela Mamaril added two points each.

It was also a good start for GCA's first time coach John Manglona, who credited the win to his players' run-and-gun style of play.

"I think that the key to this win was that our players are in shape. Because of this they could run faster than the players of the other team," he said.

Manglona also said his team played more aggressively, especially in offense.

The Lady Eagles finished second to Saipan international School last season.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

MCS Lady Knight Kaylani Lebria tries to swipe the ball away from GCA Lady Eagle Kahra Atalig in the two teams' opening day game in the 2009 COPSSA basketball league Thursday at the Mt. Carmel Gymnasium.

Lebria finished with eight points, while Amy Taylor and Demapan chipped in two points each for the Knights' losing effort.

Completing the Eagles' roster this year are Anastasia Schweiger, Kahra Atalig, Crystalline Cristobal, Kallie O'Connor, Kristine Molina, Aira Jaye Batallones, Janela Revilla, Jimaela Ham, Rinel Chargualaf, Leona Pangelinan, Julie Muna, Angela Mamaril, Abby Dimaano, Julie Muna, Angeline Velasco, and Chezka De Luna.

The Knights are composed of Amy Taylor, Skalan Yamada, Jazmine Che, Thomasa Naraja, Shaniah Alvarez, Rikki Kautz, Chelsea Bartolo, Carey Demapan, Kimberley Sablan, Kaylani Lebria, and Rachel Borja.

GCA Eagles 32 – O'Connor 8, De Luna 8, Revilla 6, Molina 6, Cristobal 2, Mamaril 2;

MCS Knights 12 – Lebria 8, Taylor 2, Demapan 8.

Scoring by halves: 12-8, 32-12.

MMA fighters ready for ROP VI

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

TRENCH TECH

Two mixed martial arts fighters from Guam who will be fighting in the semi and main events of Rites of Passage VI: Conviction tonight expressed optimism about their chances against their separate foes from Saipan.

The fights, jointly sponsored by Docomo and Miller Lite, will be held at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort starting at 7 pm with an entry fee of $20.

"My chances are good," said Ryan "The Dentist" Urquizu during the official weigh-in yesterday at The Flair Bar in Garapan, where Trench Tech Inc. president and promoter Cuki Alvarez explained the official MMA rules and regulations to 28 fighters.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

The two fighters from Guam seeing action in the semi and main events—Hosea Ware, right, and Ryan Urquiza—pose for the camera during the official weigh-in at The Flair yesterday.

Urquizu, who has a 12-4 win-loss record, will go up against Saipan's Maitai "The Charger" Charley in the main event.

Charley, who has a 3-4 record and representing Marianas Elite, was unavailable for comment as of presstime along with the other Saipan fighter for the semi main event, Syl "The Deal" Teregeyo.

Teregeyo, who also comes from Marianas Elite, has a 4-3 record.

His opponent will be Hosea Ware from Guam's Ground-Fu.

The 19-year-old Ware has a 5-1 record and is fighting for the first time outside of Guam.

"I am a last-minute replacement but I have been training regularly and I am confident

See MMA on Page 27

CPA, Legislature beat unheralded opponents

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Commonwealth Ports Authority continued its winning form on Thursday night as it routed unheralded Mayor's Office, 21-9, to move to second place in the 2008 Budweiser Inter-Government / Business Softball League at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Third baseman Jack Guerrero scored four runs in the first, third, sixth, and seventh innings to lead CPA's offense.

Three other teammates, Mel Manahane, Byron Kaipat, and Ryan Sablan came up with three each, while Mark Toves, pitcher Donald Pangelinan, and catcher Peter Boria added two each and Mike Guerrero and Franks Roberts reached home plate once to help put their team in second place with a 10-1 record, behind league-leading and defending champion DCCA's undefeated 10-0 record.

Kaipat scored the lone homerun of the night right in the top of the first inning that gave them a 4-0 lead.

He finished the game with three runs, five hits, and five RBIs.

CPA established an early 8-3 lead but Mayor' office close the gap at 7-8 after the bottom third.

See CPA on Page 27